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# THE AMERICAN Legion

MARCH 2004  
Vol. 156, No. 3

*For God and Country*

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The American Legion Magazine, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values; strong national security; adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans; community service; and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.

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Indianapolis, IN 46206  
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The American Legion Magazine  
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Copyright 2004 by The American Legion

**The American Legion** (ISSN 0886-1234) is published monthly by The American Legion, 5745 Lee Road, Indianapolis, IN 46216. Periodicals postage paid at Indianapolis, IN 46204 and additional mailing offices. Annual non-member and gift subscriptions, \$15 (\$21, foreign); post-sponsored and widows' subscriptions, \$6; single copy, \$3.50. Member annual subscription price \$3.00, which is included in annual member dues. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The American Legion, Data Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206. Internet address: <http://www.legion.org>.

**Change of Address:** Notify The American Legion, Data Services, P.O. Box 1954, Indianapolis, IN 46206. (317) 860-3111. Attach old address label, provide old and new addresses and current membership card number.

Canada Post International Publications Mail (Canadian Distribution) Sales Agreement No. 546321. Re-entered second-class mail matter at Manila Central Post office dated Dec. 22, 1991.

 **Printed in USA**  
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## New labels



Concerning “Divided We Stand” (January), I wholeheartedly agree with Dinesh D’Souza when he says that the modern conservative is in the image of the classic liberalism of the founders. My only suggestion is that we rename today’s conservatives and liberals. The correct labels are “classic liberals” and “socialists.” —Mark Orenstein, Chicago

### Insult to Democrats

Dinesh D’Souza does a great disservice to Democrats who are soldiers fighting for America today and in all wars past when he says, “Liberalism has become the party of anti-Americanism.” His article leads me to believe that with increased power, other people who think as he does will round up Democrats and put them into concentration camps. I now see that America will not fall from forces outside our borders but from the hate preached by Americans like D’Souza.

—Walter E. Smith, Alexandria, Va.

### Minority rules

I just read “Divided We Stand.” Unfortunately, the best part is the magazine cover. What Dinesh D’Souza and E.J. Dionne completely miss is the decision facing our nation: either the rule of the majority is respected while we protect as much as humanly possible the individual rights of the minority, or we brush aside the majority and simply give the minority control of our government and morality.

The American legal and elected branches of government are being used to this express purpose based upon an interpretation of our system of government that is faulty at best and not based in historical fact. The very existence of democracy depends upon the majority being respected and the minority understanding that basic principle.

Minority interests in the United States are forcing their individual agendas upon the vast majority in the name of freedom. That is socialism.

—Adrienne McPhail, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

### Good at heart

The liberal vs. conservative debate is not such a complex subject. In fact, the problem practically resolves itself with some careful thought. Dinesh D’Souza says the founding fathers demonstrated “classic liberalism,” which largely defines American conservatism. But recall that this outlook tolerated slavery and denied the vote to women.

The founders were liberals in their own time, and given 200 years more to think things through, they would be liberals today. D’Souza points out that liberals believe people are basically good, while conservatives see people as the “warped timber of humanity.” He also believes we all need a social structure to “suppress man’s lower or base impulses.” If that’s the difference between liberal and conservative, I rejoice in being a liberal.

—Dennis Newton, Lebanon, Ore.

### WE WANT YOUR OPINIONS

*The American Legion Magazine* welcomes letters concerning articles that appear in the publication. Be sure to include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters are subject to editing. Send your opinions to:

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You also can contact us directly via e-mail or through the World Wide Web:

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## Dishonest debate

*The American Legion Magazine* must believe its readers turn off their brains when they open an issue. The “Divided We Stand” piece is a classic example. The conservative “defense” is put forth by Dinesh D’Souza, an ardent conservative who tells us bluntly, “Since liberals have a wrong view of man, their policies are unlikely to achieve good results.” However, the liberal “defense” is given by E.J. Dionne Jr., a senior fellow at the right-centrist Brookings Institution, hardly someone who would be expected to “defend” liberalism (and he doesn’t). Dionne essentially tells us that what America needs is “patriotic liberalism” — implying, of course, that liberals are inherently unpatriotic. If the magazine had truly meant to give its readers an honest, healthy debate on liberalism vs. conservatism, it certainly could have found a better liberal spokesman than Dionne.

—James L. Townsend Jr., Clarksdale, Miss.

## Clashing values

Thanks for your thought-provoking feature “Divided We Stand.” The writers articulated their positions clearly. As I read D’Souza’s article, I immediately connected with him. Some conservative and liberal values seem to overlap, but others clash. D’Souza spoke of virtue, morality and even God. Dionne avoided these topics, for good reason. Liberals don’t care much about the poorest in our midst: the baby in the womb. Dionne said, “To many historians it is odd that the word ‘liberal’ has become as unpopular as polls suggest.” I’d argue that liberalism has become synonymous with abortion and other amoral values. Thanks for keeping issues in the forefront, for a great magazine and for putting God first in your motto.

—Donald C. Romero, Abbeville, La.

## Believe in self

What would happen if we eliminated “conservative” and “liberal” from dictionaries? Would we stop passing blame or would we just coin new words? I’ve been



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**WHAT IMPORTANT INFORMATION SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT LEVITRA?**

**LEVITRA can cause your blood pressure to drop suddenly to an unsafe level if it is taken with certain other medicines.** With a sudden drop in blood pressure, you could get dizzy, faint, or have a heart attack or stroke.

**Do not take LEVITRA if you:**

- take any medicines called "nitrates."
- use recreational drugs called "poppers" like amyl nitrate and butyl nitrate.
- take medicines called alpha-blockers.

(See "Who Should Not Take LEVITRA?")

**Tell all your healthcare providers that you take LEVITRA.** If you need emergency medical care for a heart problem, it will be important for your healthcare provider to know when you last took LEVITRA.

**WHAT IS LEVITRA?**

LEVITRA is a prescription medicine taken by mouth for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) in men.

ED is a condition where the penis does not harden and expand when a man is sexually excited, or when he cannot keep an erection. A man who has trouble getting or keeping an erection should see his doctor for help if the condition bothers him. LEVITRA may help a man with ED get and keep an erection when he is sexually excited.

**LEVITRA does not:**

- cure ED
- increase a man's sexual desire
- protect a man or his partner from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Speak to your doctor about ways to guard against sexually transmitted diseases.
- serve as a male form of birth control

LEVITRA is only for men with ED. LEVITRA is not for women or children. LEVITRA must be used only under a doctor's care.

**HOW DOES LEVITRA WORK?**

When a man is sexually stimulated, his body's normal physical response is to increase blood flow to his penis. This results in an erection. LEVITRA helps increase blood flow to the penis and may help men with ED get and keep an erection satisfactory for sexual activity. Once a man has completed sexual activity, blood flow to his penis decreases, and his erection goes away.

**WHO CAN TAKE LEVITRA?**

Talk to your doctor to decide if LEVITRA is right for you.

LEVITRA has been shown to be effective in men over the age of 18 years who have erectile dysfunction, including men with diabetes or who have undergone prostatectomy.

**WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE LEVITRA?**

**Do not take LEVITRA if you:**

- take any medicines called "nitrates" (See "What important information should you know about LEVITRA?"). Nitrates are commonly used to treat angina. Angina is a symptom of heart disease and can cause pain in your chest, jaw, or down your arm. Medicines called nitrates include nitroglycerin that is found in tablets, sprays, ointments, pastes, or patches. Nitrates can also be found in other medicines such as isosorbide dinitrate or isosorbide mononitrate. Some recreational drugs called "poppers" also contain nitrates, such as amyl nitrate and butyl nitrate. Do not use LEVITRA if you are using these drugs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if any of your medicines are nitrates.

- take medicines called "alpha-blockers." Alpha-blockers are sometimes prescribed for prostate problems or high blood pressure. If LEVITRA is taken with alpha-blockers, your blood pressure could suddenly drop to an unsafe level. You could get dizzy and faint.

- you have been told by your healthcare provider to not have sexual activity because of health problems. Sexual activity can put an extra strain on your heart, especially if your heart is already weak from a heart attack or heart disease.

- are allergic to LEVITRA or any of its ingredients. The active ingredient in LEVITRA is called vardenafil. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING LEVITRA?**

**Before taking LEVITRA, tell your doctor about all your medical problems, including if you:**

- have heart problems such as angina, heart failure, irregular heartbeats, or have had a heart attack. Ask your doctor if it is safe for you to have sexual activity.
- have low blood pressure or have high blood pressure that is not controlled
- have had a stroke
- or any family members have a rare heart condition known as prolongation of the QT interval (long QT syndrome)
- have liver problems
- have kidney problems and require dialysis
- have retinitis pigmentosa, a rare genetic (runs in families) eye disease
- have stomach ulcers
- have a bleeding problem
- have a deformed penis shape or Peyronie's disease
- have had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours
- have blood cell problems such as sickle cell anemia, multiple myeloma, or leukemia

**CAN OTHER MEDICATIONS AFFECT LEVITRA?**

Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LEVITRA and other medicines may affect each other. Always check with your doctor before starting or stopping any medicines. Especially tell your doctor if you take any of the following:

- medicines called nitrates (See "What important information should you know about LEVITRA?")
- medicines called alpha-blockers. These include Hytrin® (terazosin HCl), Flomax® (tamsulosin HCl), Cardura® (doxazosin mesylate), Minipress® (prazosin HCl) or Uroxatral® (alfuzosin HCl).
- medicines that treat abnormal heartbeat. These include quinidine, procainamide, amiodarone and sotalol.
- ritonavir (Norvir®) or indinavir sulfate (Crixivan®)
- ketoconazole or itraconazole (such as Nizoral® or Sporanox®)
- erythromycin
- other medicines or treatments for ED

**HOW SHOULD YOU TAKE LEVITRA?**

Take LEVITRA exactly as your doctor prescribes. LEVITRA comes in different doses (2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, and 20 mg). For most men, the recommended starting dose is 10 mg. **Take LEVITRA no more than once a day.** Doses should be taken at least 24 hours apart. Some men can only take a low dose of LEVITRA because of medical conditions or medicines they take. Your doctor will prescribe the dose that is right for you.

- If you are older than 65 or have liver problems, your doctor may start you on a lower dose of LEVITRA.
- If you are taking certain other medicines your doctor may prescribe a lower starting dose and limit you to one dose of LEVITRA in a 72-hour (3 days) period.

Take 1 LEVITRA tablet about 1 hour (60 minutes) before sexual activity. Some form of sexual stimulation is needed for an erection to happen with LEVITRA. LEVITRA may be taken with or without meals.

Do not change your dose of LEVITRA without talking to your doctor. Your doctor may lower your dose or raise your dose, depending on how your body reacts to LEVITRA.

If you take too much LEVITRA, call your doctor or emergency room right away.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LEVITRA?**

The most common side effects with LEVITRA are headache, flushing, stuffy or runny nose, indigestion, upset stomach, or dizziness. These side effects usually go away after a few hours. Call your doctor if you get a side effect that bothers you or one that will not go away.

**LEVITRA may uncommonly cause:**

- an erection that won't go away (priapism). If you get an erection that lasts more than 4 hours, get medical help right away. Priapism must be treated as soon as possible or lasting damage can happen to your penis including the inability to have erections.
- vision changes, such as seeing a blue tinge to objects or having difficulty telling the difference between the colors blue and green. These are not all the side effects of LEVITRA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

**HOW SHOULD LEVITRA BE STORED?**

- Store LEVITRA at room temperature between 59° and 86° F (15° to 30° C).

- Keep LEVITRA and all medicines out of the reach of children.

**GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LEVITRA.**

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions other than those described in patient information leaflets. Do not use LEVITRA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give LEVITRA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about LEVITRA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about LEVITRA that is written for health professionals.

For more information you can also visit [www.LEVITRA.com](http://www.LEVITRA.com), or call 1-866-LEVITRA.

**WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF LEVITRA?**

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accused of both liberalism and conservatism by people who think they know me best. I no longer know what it means to be either. The magic bullet of a singular creed heals nothing but only makes irreparable holes. I prefer to believe in myself rather than have someone else tell me what to think.

— Mark Griffin, Russellville, Ky.

## Worth the ticket

"Mel Gibson: Passionate Warrior" (January) is a fine piece of work. To learn that Gibson's father saw combat at Guadalcanal during World War II was enlightening, as well as that Gibson ended up in Australia because his father won on the TV game show "Jeopardy." I'll be happy to pay the price of a ticket to "The Passion of the Christ" when it reaches the local moviehouse.

— Allen O'Donnell, Wayne, Neb.

## No historical fact

For a Jew, Michael Medved's approval of Mel Gibson's portrayal of the Jewish role in Jesus' crucifixion in his movie, "The Passion of the Christ," betrays gullibility. The gospel accounts on which Gibson bases his movie are palpable religious propaganda, not historically credible reports. Only one historically documented fact about Jesus exists: the Romans crucified him for sedition. Writing just after the Jewish War, Christian proselytizers couldn't admit the truth: their religion's founder, like the defeated Jewish Zealots, was a rebel.

Accordingly, the gospels' convoluted accounts of Jesus' trial and execution contradict historical records. Pontius Pilate is portrayed as a vacillating weakling, blackmailed by the Jewish mob into crucifying a man he believes innocent. The Pilate depicted by Josephus and Philo was rapacious, willful, brutal and corrupt. The Pilate of gospel myth and the Pilate of history are two distinct men. The gospels' scapegoating of the Jews for Jesus' crucifixion has absolutely no claim to credibility.

— C.W. Griffin, Phoenix



## Porous borders

If one considers Asa Hutchinson's prior work as undersecretary of the Drug Enforcement Administration ("America's Gatekeeper," January), it seems the invasion of illegal immigrants into America will significantly increase – just as drug imports did when Hutchinson was in charge of the drug agency. Hutchinson says he's made "amazing progress" in his new job and is having success in reducing the number of illegal immigrants entering the country. This is false and misleading, as more illegal immigrants – 8,000 daily, according to Numbersusa.com, an immigration-reform group – sneak past Hutchinson's dragnet.

America has a military presence in 125 foreign countries but refuses to defend its own borders with troops, leaving Americans as vulnerable as our enemies want us. We are routinely searched at any airport, yet our porous borders allow anyone with any intention to walk right in. Until Bush, Hutchinson and Ridge put our military on America's borders and deport all illegal aliens, the Department for Border and Transportation Security will be just another government boondoggle and waste of tax dollars.

– Pat Smith, Somerville, N.J.

## Unsafe procedure

After reading January's Big Issues, "Restrict Access to Abortion Drug," it appears Rep. Diana DeGette, D-Colo., needs to study the use of RU-486. The abortion clinic that performed the abortion on the California girl who died did not follow procedure. The two pills must be administered by a doctor trained in abortion, able to read sonograms and handle complications from the procedure. In this case, the girl received the first pill at a Planned Parenthood clinic and was given a second pill to take at home. She was advised to do it vaginally, a direct violation of the protocol established by the manufacturers of RU-486. As Rep. David Vitter pointed out, the procedure is not all that safe and could result in a number of

possible side effects, such as an incomplete abortion. Women deserve to be informed of the risks and have the right to a properly performed procedure.

– Keith L. Stanton, Tracy, Minn.

## Narrow the scope

Articles about animal rights or abortion drugs have no bearing on veterans' activities and are not within what should be the purview of *The American Legion Magazine*. While such subjects may be of interest to everyone, they belong elsewhere.

– Marvin Drake, Spring Arbor, Mich.

## Our kids in uniform

I commend Frank Schaeffer for his courage to stand up for our enlisted men and women, our children ("My Son and War," January). As a new Blue Star Mother, daughter of a World War II veteran and wife of a Vietnam War veteran, I worry that some Americans have not heeded the wakeup call of Sept. 11, 2001. I thank God for our freedoms and those who protect them, among those my own son serving in the Navy. Our support will speak volumes to those "oversolicitous soccer moms" and terrorists alike.

– Michele Palmer, West Newfield, Maine

## Vicious attack

What bothers me about Frank Schaeffer's commentary is the vicious way he attacks people whose social or political views may differ from his. His diatribe appears to be at odds with his other career as a writer and speaker on God and the Bible. How does he reconcile his religiosity with his acerbity toward his fellow man? Seems he should get the chip off his shoulder and re-examine his scurrilous and generalized characterization of 17-year-olds, their teachers and their classmates.

– Nicholas J. Matthews, Silver Spring, Md.

## America gone soft

I'd like to commend Frank Schaeffer for his commentary "My Son and War." I too, as a mother, felt conflicted at the thought of my son enlisting. Although I support

the war, I know my son and I knew he would feel the call to go. The article inspired me to ask him why. His grandfather and uncles all served. Did their experiences and commitment have an impact on him? His answer was interesting. He said he had respect for our country because of the sacrifices his grandfather and uncles made to protect our freedoms. My son and others like him see terrorists as a direct threat to their families and freedom.

Since the Vietnam War, Americans have become so passive it is frightening. Fear is what drives us. "Oh, if we leave them alone they won't bother us." We know that isn't true. Americans must begin to sort out the media's propaganda and realize what we have to lose. Thanks for an enlightening issue.

– Lucretia Agostarola, Goodyear, Ariz.

## Hope remains

I am devastated by the December articles on North Korea ("Gulag Nation," "For the Children"). We all thought Stalin, Hitler and Saddam were bad, but look at Kim Jong Il. I am appalled at the United Nations' failure to correct this horrible situation. Here is a man using the construction of nuclear bombs as a tool to gain more power and to threaten the United States. Can we afford to go into North Korea? Not sure. We don't have the military to do it, thanks to the previous administration, but we do have a country that respects life. The many nations helping us in Iraq give me hope that the situation will improve.

– Richard Gibbens Robichaux, Thibodaux, La.

## Tell the world

Kim Jong Il is another Hitler who thinks he can blackmail the world to get what he wants. If he wants a nuclear bomb, we should give him one – from the business end of a B-52. The sooner he's out of power, the better North Korea will be. Dr. Norbert Vollertsen is right to raise a stink. The world needs to know.

– Edward Duesing, Pell Lake, Wis.



# Step up for our troops



National  
Commander  
John Brieden  
*Chase Studios*

*"Saddam's capture and the daily return of soldiers should not result in a slowdown of generosity on our part."*



A year ago, a new front opened in the war on terrorism. Acting in the interests of national security and on behalf of an oppressed people, President Bush sent U.S. forces into Iraq to end the regime of Saddam Hussein. Within days, our soldiers reached Baghdad and deposed a dangerous and unpredictable dictator who harbored dreams of mass destruction.

Even while battling intense resistance from regime loyalists and engaging in a manhunt for dozens of Baathist leaders, our GIs began laying a foundation for one of the first democracies in the Middle East. They assured the Iraqi people that they would soon be masters of their own destiny. Once again, U.S. soldiers kept their promise to liberate rather than conquer.

These brave men and women deserve far more than a round of applause, medals and grand parades when they return home. They have done our nation – indeed, our world – a great service that we cannot easily repay.

**A Difficult Road.** In just one year, U.S. soldiers have helped Iraq establish a governing council, as well as neighborhood and city councils across the country. They have reopened hundreds of hospitals and thousands of medical clinics and schools. They have trained security personnel, border guards and soldiers. They nabbed Saddam Hussein and captured or killed dozens of his henchmen, confirming for a skeptical Iraqi population that the regime they once feared will not return to power.

Our troops have not traveled an easy road. Along the way, they have lost friends to enemy fire and suffered wounds of the most painful physical and psychological sort. In an impatient era in which war is measured in days and not years, they remain committed to seeing reconstruction through to completion, however long it takes.

During this difficult phase, Americans at home remain the lifeline for our service personnel. They count on us to support their efforts and the families they have left behind. When our troops went to war, millions showered them with well wishes, care packages and financial donations. Saddam's capture and the daily return of soldiers should not result in a slowdown of generosity on our part.

**Show Your Thanks.** The American Legion's Family Support Network remains a major avenue of aid for deployed servicemembers and their families. With 15,000 Legion posts across the country, no soldier's loved ones need go without help during this difficult time. By calling our toll-free number, **1-800-504-4098**, family members can request assistance with car repair, lawn care, baby-sitting or any other concern. I urge Legionnaires to get this number into the hands of families needing our help.

More than 500 servicemembers have been killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Many were parents. The deaths often leave the prospects of higher education in limbo for their children. That's why the Legion has established the American Legacy Scholarship for the children of service personnel killed on or after Sept. 11, 2001. Contributions are tax-deductible, and those who donate can know that their gifts will shape the futures of these children. Send contributions to The American Legacy Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206.

After visiting wounded servicemembers at Walter Reed in Washington and Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, I can assure you that a personal word of thanks goes a long way in healing. I urge Americans to visit their local military hospitals to show their gratitude.

Another way to back our troops is to support Fisher House, a public-private partnership that provides low-cost housing for relatives who wish to be near their wounded soldier. More Fisher Houses are needed, and existing homes need resources to serve military families. To be part of this effort, contact Fisher House at **(888) 294-8560** or online at **Fisherhouse.org**.

These soldiers' families travel at their own expense to be near their recovering loved ones. Thus, Fisher House has partnered with Operation Hero Miles to provide free plane tickets to families of soldiers injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. You can help by donating your unused frequent-flyer miles online at **Heromiles.org**.

These are just a few ways to show your appreciation to the brave men and women who keep us free. How we choose to give isn't as important as the fact that we do give, selflessly and cheerfully. Our military must know that we are, indeed, a grateful nation.



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# Tariffs on imported steel

## SUPPORT

**Rep. Bob Ney**  
R-Ohio



Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. steel industry suffered a devastating crisis. Tens of millions of tons of cheap, foreign-made steel produced on the backs of workers earning pennies per hour flooded the American marketplace, forcing U.S. steel mills to close and thousands of

workers to be put out on the streets.

Steel is part of the lifeblood of our nation's infrastructure. From buildings to bridges to battle-ships, steel is one of America's most critical re-sources. To lose it and be forced to rely on foreign

*"I remain very concerned that foreign countries will once again flood our marketplace."*

imports at the same time we are being forced to import millions of gallons of oil each year would irreparably harm our nation's security.

Recognizing this, President Bush ordered needed tariffs placed on foreign steel for a three-year period in order to

give the domestic industry an opportunity to consolidate, regroup and grow stronger. Domestic production grew, and thousands of jobs were saved as steel companies in the Ohio Valley and beyond put plans in place to succeed in the 21st century.

Unfortunately, halfway through this three-year program and under great pressure from the international community, the president lifted the tariffs.

I am profoundly disappointed the three-year commitment was not kept. The war against terrorism, and particularly our military engagement in Iraq, provides no greater example of the need to ensure a strong American steel industry. I recognize that much has been accomplished and that the president, with his decision to put the tariffs in place, saved the domestic industry from extinction. But I remain concerned that foreign countries will once again flood our marketplace.

Now that the tariffs have been lifted and the American steel industry is once again exposed to corrupt foreign trade practices, it is more important than ever that the Bush administration maintain vigilant oversight. The progress we have made must not fall victim to the problems of the past.

**Rep. Joe Knollenberg**  
R-Mich.

## OPPOSE



President Bush's decision in early December to lift the tariffs on imported steel that his administration imposed in March 2002 is the right decision for steel-consuming manufacturers and the economy.

As the president and his administration address the struggles of manufacturing in this country, they have rightly made it their goal to level the playing field. American manufacturers are the most efficient producers of the highest quality products in the world. They shouldn't be made less competitive by policies that tilt the playing field against them.

Steel companies and their 12 million employees are under severe pressure from global competition. They must deliver their products at lower and lower prices or lose their contracts. Their margins are slim, and every penny counts.

In this environment, any cost increase is troubling. According to U.S. International Trade Commission data, the tariffs added \$1.6 billion in extra costs to steel consumers. That creates an enormous burden foreign competitors don't have to face. It actually shifts the playing field in favor of the steel consumers who operate outside the United States.

And while the tariffs were hurting domestic steel consumers, the European Union, Japan and others were prepared to retaliate with tariffs of their own. These retaliatory tariffs would have created an uneven playing field for even more Americans.

The European Union would have placed tariffs on citrus from Florida, apples and pears from Washington and Oregon, textiles from the Carolinas, and farm and kitchen equipment from

Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and elsewhere.

Thankfully, the tariffs are gone. Consumers can buy steel at a market price, and other sectors of the economy will not suffer from retaliatory tariffs. Our economic recovery is poised to become even stronger.

### YOUR OPINIONS COUNT

Senators and representatives are interested in constituent viewpoints. You may express your views in writing at the following addresses:

**The Honorable (name)**  
**U.S. Senate**  
**Washington, DC 20510**  
**Phone: (202) 224-3121**

**The Honorable (name)**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**  
**Phone: (202) 225-3121**



# Fighting Back with Aricept®

*I love my life way too much  
to just hand it over to Alzheimer's.*

*When my memory started failing,  
I knew I had to see my doctor. He put  
me on ARICEPT®. Now I'm doing better.\**

If a person forgets names, places or facts – and has trouble with everyday things like reading or shopping – it may not be normal aging. It could be Alzheimer's disease. So it's important to see a doctor as soon as you can.

There is no cure for Alzheimer's. But a prescription drug called ARICEPT® has been used by millions of people to help their symptoms.

In studies, ARICEPT® has been proven to work for mild to moderate Alzheimer's. It has helped people improve their memory over time. It has also helped them to keep doing everyday things on their own, longer.

**Ask your doctor** if ARICEPT® is right for you or your loved one. It is the #1 prescribed drug for Alzheimer's in the world. The sooner you know it's Alzheimer's, the sooner ARICEPT® can help.

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5-MG AND 10-MG TABLETS

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a memory checklist,  
**call 800-760-6029 ext.74**  
**or visit [www.aricept.com](http://www.aricept.com)**



ARICEPT® is well tolerated but may not be for everyone. Some people may experience nausea, diarrhea, not sleeping well, vomiting, muscle cramps, feeling very tired, or not wanting to eat. In studies, these side effects were usually mild and went away over time. Some people taking ARICEPT® may experience fainting. People at risk for ulcers should tell their doctors because their condition may get worse.

Please see additional important product information on accompanying page.

\*Individual responses to ARICEPT® can be different – people may get better, stay the same or not get better.

# ARICEPT® (Donepezil Hydrochloride Tablets)

**Brief Summary**—see package insert for full prescribing information. **INDICATIONS AND USAGE** ARICEPT® is indicated for the treatment of mild to moderate dementia of the Alzheimer's type. **CONTRAINDICATIONS** ARICEPT® is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to donepezil hydrochloride or to piperidine derivatives. **WARNINGS Anesthesia:** ARICEPT®, as a cholinesterase inhibitor, is likely to exaggerate succinylcholine-type muscle relaxation during anesthesia. **Cardiovascular Conditions:** Because of their pharmacological action, cholinesterase inhibitors may have vagotonic effects on the sinoatrial and atrioventricular nodes. This effect may manifest as bradycardia or heart block in patients both with and without known underlying cardiac conduction abnormalities. Syncope episodes have been reported in association with the use of ARICEPT®. **Gastrointestinal Conditions:** Through their primary action, cholinesterase inhibitors may be expected to increase gastric acid secretion due to increased cholinergic activity. Therefore, patients should be monitored closely for symptoms of active or occult gastrointestinal bleeding, especially those at increased risk for developing ulcers, e.g., those with a history of ulcer disease or those receiving concurrent nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Clinical studies of ARICEPT® have shown no increase, relative to placebo, in the incidence of either peptic ulcer disease or gastrointestinal bleeding. ARICEPT®, as a predictable consequence of its pharmacological properties, has been shown to produce diarrhea, nausea and vomiting. These effects, when they occur, appear more frequently with the 10 mg/day dose than with the 5 mg/day dose. In most cases, these effects have been mild and transient, sometimes lasting one to three weeks, and have resolved during continued use of ARICEPT®. **Genitourinary:** Although not observed in clinical trials of ARICEPT®, cholinomimetics may cause bladder outflow obstruction. **Neurological Conditions:** Seizures: Cholinomimetics are believed to have some potential to cause generalized convulsions. However, seizure activity also may be a manifestation of Alzheimer's Disease. **Pulmonary Conditions:** Because of their cholinomimetic actions, cholinesterase inhibitors should be prescribed with care to patients with a history of asthma or obstructive pulmonary disease. **PRECAUTIONS Drug-Drug Interactions Drugs Highly Bound to Plasma Proteins:** Drug displacement studies have been performed *in vitro* between this highly bound drug (96%) and other drugs such as furosemide, digoxin, and warfarin. ARICEPT® at concentrations of 0.3-10 µg/mL did not affect the binding of furosemide (5 µg/mL), digoxin (2 ng/mL), and warfarin (3 µg/mL) to human albumin. Similarly, the binding of ARICEPT® to human albumin was not affected by furosemide, digoxin, and warfarin. **Effect of ARICEPT® on the Metabolism of Other Drugs:** No *in vivo* clinical trials have investigated the effect of ARICEPT® on the clearance of drugs metabolized by CYP 3A4 (e.g. cisapride, terfenadine) or by CYP 2D6 (e.g. imipramine). However, *in vitro* studies show a low rate of binding to these enzymes (mean K<sub>i</sub> about 50-130 µM), that, given the therapeutic plasma concentrations of donepezil (164 nM), indicates little likelihood of interference. Whether ARICEPT® has any potential for enzyme induction is not known. **Effect of Other Drugs on the Metabolism of ARICEPT®:** Ketoconazole and quinidine, inhibitors of CYP450, 3A4 and 2D6, respectively, inhibit donepezil metabolism *in vitro*. Whether there is a clinical effect of these inhibitors is not known. Inducers of CYP 2D6 and CYP 3A4 (e.g., phenytoin, carbamazepine, dexamethasone, rifampin, and phenobarbital) could increase the rate of elimination of ARICEPT®. **Use with Anticholinergics:** Because of their mechanism of action, cholinesterase inhibitors have the potential to interfere with the activity of anticholinergic medications. **Use with Cholinomimetics and Other Cholinesterase Inhibitors:** A synergistic effect may be expected when cholinesterase inhibitors are given concurrently with succinylcholine, similar neuromuscular blocking agents or cholinergic agonists such as bethanechol. **Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility** Carcinogenicity studies of donepezil have not been completed. Donepezil was not mutagenic in the Ames reverse mutation assay in bacteria. In the chromosomal aberration test in cultures of Chinese hamster lung (CHL) cells, some clastogenic effects were observed. Donepezil was not clastogenic in the *in vivo* mouse micronucleus test. Donepezil had no effect on fertility in rats at doses up to 10 mg/kg/day (approximately 8 times the maximum recommended human dose on a mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis). **Pregnancy Pregnancy Category C:** Teratology studies conducted in pregnant rats at doses up to 16 mg/kg/day (approximately 13 times the maximum recommended human dose on a mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis) and in pregnant rabbits at doses up to 10 mg/kg/day (approximately 16 times the maximum recommended human dose on a mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis) did not disclose any evidence for a teratogenic potential of donepezil. However, in a study in which pregnant rats were given up to 10 mg/kg/day (approximately 8 times the maximum recommended human dose on a mg/m<sup>2</sup> basis) from day 17 of gestation through day 20 postpartum, there was a slight increase in still births and a slight decrease in pup survival through day 4 postpartum at this dose; the next lower dose tested was 3 mg/kg/day. There are no adequate or well-controlled studies in pregnant women. ARICEPT® should be used during pregnancy only if the potential benefit justifies the potential risk to the fetus. **Nursing Mothers** It is not known whether donepezil is excreted in human breast milk. ARICEPT® has no indication for use in nursing mothers. **Pediatric Use** There are no adequate and well-controlled trials to document the safety and efficacy of ARICEPT® in any illness occurring in children. **ADVERSE REACTIONS Adverse Events Leading to Discontinuation** The rates of discontinuation from controlled clinical trials of ARICEPT® due to adverse events for the ARICEPT® 5 mg/day treatment groups were comparable to those of placebo-treatment groups at approximately 5%. The rate of discontinuation of patients who received 7-day escalations from 5 mg/day to 10 mg/day, was higher at 13%. The most common adverse events leading to discontinuation, defined as those occurring in at least 2% of patients and at twice the incidence seen in placebo patients, are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Most Frequent Adverse Events Leading to Withdrawal from Controlled Clinical Trials by Dose Group**

| Dose Group                  | Placebo | 5 mg/day ARICEPT® | 10 mg/day ARICEPT® |
|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Patients Randomized</b>  | 355     | 350               | 315                |
| <b>Event/%Discontinuing</b> |         |                   |                    |
| Nausea                      | 1%      | 1%                | 3%                 |
| Diarrhea                    | 0%      | <1%               | 3%                 |
| Vomiting                    | <1%     | <1%               | 2%                 |

**Most Frequent Adverse Clinical Events Seen in Association with the Use of ARICEPT®** The most common adverse events, defined as those occurring at a frequency of at least 5% in patients receiving 10 mg/day and twice the placebo rate, are largely predicted by ARICEPT®'s cholinomimetic effects. These include nausea, diarrhea, insomnia, vomiting, muscle cramp, fatigue and anorexia. These adverse events were often of mild intensity and transient, resolving during continued ARICEPT® treatment without the need for dose modification. There is evidence to suggest that the frequency of these common adverse events may be affected by the rate of titration. An open-label study was conducted with 269 patients who received placebo in the 15- and 30-week studies. These patients were titrated to a dose of 10 mg/day over a 6-week period. The rates of common adverse events were lower than those seen in patients titrated to 10 mg/day over one week in the controlled clinical trials and were comparable to those seen in patients on 5 mg/day. See Table 2 for a comparison of the most common adverse events following one and six week titration regimens.

**Table 2. Comparison of Rates of Adverse Events in Patients Titrated to 10 mg/day Over 1 and 6 Weeks**

| Adverse Event | No titration    |                  | One-week titration |                   | Six-week titration |                   |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
|               | Placebo (n=315) | 5 mg/day (n=311) | 10 mg/day (n=315)  | 10 mg/day (n=269) | 10 mg/day (n=269)  | 10 mg/day (n=269) |
| Nausea        | 6%              | 5%               | 19%                | 6%                | 6%                 | 6%                |
| Diarrhea      | 5%              | 8%               | 15%                | 9%                | 9%                 | 9%                |
| Insomnia      | 6%              | 6%               | 14%                | 6%                | 6%                 | 6%                |
| Fatigue       | 3%              | 4%               | 8%                 | 3%                | 3%                 | 3%                |
| Vomiting      | 3%              | 3%               | 8%                 | 5%                | 5%                 | 5%                |
| Muscle cramps | 2%              | 6%               | 8%                 | 3%                | 3%                 | 3%                |
| Anorexia      | 2%              | 3%               | 7%                 | 3%                | 3%                 | 3%                |

**Adverse Events Reported in Controlled Trials** The events cited reflect experience gained under closely monitored conditions of clinical trials in a highly selected patient population. In actual clinical practice or in other clinical trials, these frequency estimates may not apply, as the conditions of use, reporting behavior, and the kinds of patients treated may differ. Table 3 lists treatment emergent signs and symptoms that were reported in at least 2% of patients in placebo-controlled trials who received ARICEPT® and for which the rate of occurrence was greater for ARICEPT® assigned than placebo assigned patients. In general, adverse events occurred more frequently in female patients and with advancing age.

**Table 3. Adverse Events Reported in Controlled Clinical Trials in at Least 2% of Patients Receiving ARICEPT® (donepezil HCl) and at a Higher Frequency than Placebo-treated Patients**

| Body System/Adverse Event                         | Placebo (n=355) | ARICEPT® (n=747) |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| <b>Percent of Patients with any Adverse Event</b> | <b>72</b>       | <b>74</b>        |
| <b>Body as a Whole</b>                            |                 |                  |
| Headache                                          | 9               | 10               |
| Pain, various locations                           | 8               | 9                |
| Accident                                          | 6               | 7                |
| Fatigue                                           | 3               | 5                |
| <b>Cardiovascular System</b>                      |                 |                  |
| Syncope                                           | 1               | 2                |
| <b>Digestive System</b>                           |                 |                  |
| Nausea                                            | 6               | 11               |
| Diarrhea                                          | 5               | 10               |
| Vomiting                                          | 3               | 5                |
| Anorexia                                          | 2               | 4                |
| <b>Hemic and Lymphatic System</b>                 |                 |                  |
| Echymosis                                         | 3               | 4                |
| <b>Metabolic and Nutritional Systems</b>          |                 |                  |
| Weight Decrease                                   | 1               | 3                |
| <b>Musculoskeletal System</b>                     |                 |                  |
| Muscle Cramps                                     | 2               | 6                |
| Arthritis                                         | 1               | 2                |
| <b>Nervous System</b>                             |                 |                  |
| Insomnia                                          | 6               | 9                |
| Dizziness                                         | 6               | 8                |
| Depression                                        | <1              | 3                |
| Abnormal Dreams                                   | 0               | 3                |
| Somnolence                                        | <1              | 2                |
| <b>Urogenital System</b>                          |                 |                  |
| Frequent Urination                                | 1               | 2                |

**Other Adverse Events Observed During Clinical Trials** ARICEPT® has been administered to over 1700 individuals during clinical trials worldwide. Approximately 1200 of these patients have been treated for at least 3 months and more than 1000 patients have been treated for at least 6 months. Controlled and uncontrolled trials in the United States included approximately 900 patients. In regards to the highest dose of 10 mg/day, this population includes 650 patients treated for 3 months, 475 patients treated for 6 months and 116 patients treated for over 1 year. The range of patient exposure is from 1 to 1214 days. Treatment emergent signs and symptoms that occurred during 3 controlled clinical trials and two open-label trials in the United States were recorded as adverse events by the clinical investigators using terminology of their own choosing. To provide an overall estimate of the proportion of individuals having similar types of events, the events were grouped into a smaller number of standardized categories using a modified COSTART dictionary and event frequencies were calculated across all studies. These categories are used in the listing below. The frequencies represent the proportion of 900 patients from these trials who experienced that event while receiving ARICEPT®. All adverse events occurring at least twice are included, except for those already listed in Tables 2 or 3. COSTART terms too general to be informative, or events less likely to be drug caused. Events are classified by body system and listed using the following definitions: **Infrequent adverse events**—those occurring in at least 1/100 patients; **Infrequent adverse events**—those occurring in 1/100 to 1/1000 patients. These adverse events are not necessarily related to ARICEPT® treatment and in most cases were observed at a similar frequency in placebo-treated patients in the controlled studies. No important additional adverse events were seen in studies conducted outside the United States.

**Body as a Whole:** Infrequent: influenza, chest pain, toothache; **Infrequent:** fever, edema face, periorbital edema, hernia hiatal, abscess, cellulitis, chills, generalized coldness, head fullness, listlessness. **Cardiovascular System:** **Frequent:** hypertension, vasodilation, atrial fibrillation, hot flashes, hypotension; **Infrequent:** angina pectoris, postural hypotension, myocardial infarction, AV block (first degree), congestive heart failure, arteritis, bradycardia, peripheral vascular disease, supraventricular tachycardia, deep vein thrombosis. **Digestive System:** **Frequent:** fecal incontinence, gastrointestinal bleeding, bloating, epigastric pain; **Infrequent:** eructation, gingivitis, increased appetite, flatulence, periodontal abscess, cholelithiasis, diverticulitis, drooling, dry mouth, fever sore, gastritis, irritable colon, tongue edema, epigastric distress, gastroenteritis, increased transaminases, hemorrhoids, ileus, increased thirst, jaundice, melena, polydipsia, duodenal ulcer, stomach ulcer. **Endocrine System:** **Infrequent:** diabetes mellitus, goiter. **Hemic and Lymphatic System:** **Infrequent:** anemia, thrombocytopenia, thrombocytopenia, eosinophilia, erythrocytopenia. **Metabolic and Nutritional Disorders:** **Frequent:** dehydration; **Infrequent:** gout, hypokalemia, increased creatine kinase, hyperglycemia, weight increase, increased lactate dehydrogenase. **Musculoskeletal System:** **Frequent:** bone fracture; **Infrequent:** muscle weakness, muscle fasciculation. **Nervous System:** **Frequent:** delusions, tremor, irritability, paresthesia, aggression, vertigo, ataxia, increased libido, restlessness, abnormal crying, nervousness, aphasia; **Infrequent:** cerebrovascular accident, intracranial hemorrhage, transient ischemic attack, emotional lability, neuralgia, coldness (localized), muscle spasm, dysphoria, gait abnormality, hypertonia, hypokinesia, neurodermatitis, numbness (localized), paranoia, dysarthria, dysphasia, hostility, decreased libido, melancholia, emotional withdrawal, nystagmus, pacing. **Respiratory System:** **Frequent:** dyspnea, sore throat, bronchitis; **Infrequent:** epistaxis, post nasal drip, pneumonia, hyperventilation, pulmonary congestion, wheezing, hypoxia, pharyngitis, pleurisy, pulmonary collapse, sleep apnea, sneezing. **Skin and Appendages:** **Frequent:** pruritus, diaphoresis, urticaria; **Infrequent:** dermatitis, erythema, skin discoloration, hyperkeratosis, alopecia, fungal dermatitis, herpes zoster, hirsutism, skin striae, night sweats, skin ulcer. **Special Senses:** **Frequent:** cataract, eye irritation, vision blurred; **Infrequent:** dry eyes, glaucoma, earache, tinnitus, blepharitis, decreased hearing, retinal hemorrhage, otitis externa, otitis media, bad taste, conjunctival hemorrhage, ear buzzing, motion sickness, spots before eyes. **Urogenital System:** **Frequent:** urinary incontinence, nocturia; **Infrequent:** dysuria, hematuria, urinary urgency, metrorrhagia, cystitis, enuresis, prostatic hypertrophy, pyelonephritis, inability to empty bladder, breast fibroadenosis, fibrocystic breast, mastitis, pyuria, renal failure, vaginitis. **Postintroduction Reports** Voluntary reports of adverse events temporally associated with ARICEPT® that have been received since market introduction that are not listed above, and that there is inadequate data to determine the causal relationship with the drug include the following: abdominal pain, agitation, cholecystitis, confusion, convulsions, hallucinations, heart block (all types), hemolytic anemia, hepatitis, hyponatremia, neuroleptic malignant syndrome, pancreatitis, and rash. **OVERDOSAGE Because strategies for the management of overdose are continually evolving, it is advisable to contact a Poison Control Center to determine the latest recommendations for the management of an overdose of any drug.** As in any case of overdose, general supportive measures should be utilized. Overdose with cholinesterase inhibitors can result in cholinergic crisis characterized by severe nausea, vomiting, salivation, sweating, bradycardia, hypotension, respiratory depression, collapse and convulsions. Increasing muscle weakness is a possibility and may result in death if respiratory muscles are involved. Tertiary anticholinergics such as atropine may be used as an antidote for ARICEPT® overdose. Intravenous atropine sulfate titrated to effect is recommended: an initial dose of 1.0 to 2.0 mg IV with subsequent doses based on clinical response. Atypical responses in blood pressure and heart rate have been reported with other cholinomimetics when co-administered with quaternary anticholinergics such as glycopyrrolate. It is not known whether ARICEPT® and/or its metabolites can be removed by dialysis (hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis, or hemofiltration). Dose-related signs of toxicity in animals included reduced spontaneous movement, prone position, staggering gait, lacrimation, clonic convulsions, depressed respiration, salivation, miosis, tremors, fasciculation and lower body surface temperature. **DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION** The dosages of ARICEPT® shown to be effective in controlled clinical trials are 5 mg and 10 mg administered once per day. The higher dose of 10 mg did not provide a statistically significantly greater clinical benefit than 5 mg. There is a suggestion, however, based upon order of group mean scores and dose trend analyses of data from these clinical trials, that a daily dose of 10 mg of ARICEPT® might provide additional benefit for some patients. Accordingly, whether or not to employ a dose of 10 mg is a matter of prescriber and patient preference. Evidence from the controlled trials indicates that the 10 mg dose, with a one week titration, is likely to be associated with a higher incidence of cholinergic adverse events than the 5 mg dose. In open label trials using a 6 week titration, the frequency of these same adverse events was similar between the 5 mg and 10 mg dose groups. Therefore, because steady state is not achieved for 15 days and because the incidence of untoward effects may be influenced by the rate of dose escalation, treatment with a dose of 10 mg should not be contemplated until patients have been on a daily dose of 5 mg for 4 to 6 weeks. ARICEPT® should be taken in the evening, just prior to retiring, and may be taken with or without food.



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New York, NY 10017

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Revised December 2000

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# Dear American soldier in Iraq:

BY DENNIS PRAGER

I am writing to you simply as a fellow American.

In just about every way, I am quite typical. I am a married man with three children, believe in God and love my country. I differ, however, from many Americans in a couple of ways. First, my vocation – radio talk-show host and columnist – makes me a professional communicator. So I might be able to say things that most other Americans feel but could not communicate quite as clearly. Second, and more important, I suspect that more than some Americans, though hardly more than President Bush and his administration, I am keenly aware of the fragility of civilization, of the monumental evil you are fighting, and of the historic mission of America.

For these reasons, I am writing to you. Though you may already know everything I am about to say, I need to say it for those of you who, after seeing fellow soldiers blown up or severely injured, may sometimes wonder whether these sacrifices are worth it.

So, first, let me set the record straight. Not since World War II have the stakes been this great. This is a war for the future of civilization every bit as much as the war against German Nazism and Japanese Fascism was. If we had lost that war, the world would have devolved into barbarism.

If we lose this one, the same will happen.

It was a war for civilization then; the war against Islamic Fascism is such a war today.

Of course, there are hundreds of millions of fine people among the world's 1.3 billion Muslims. But that is, unfortunately, as irrelevant to understanding today's war as the fact that there were millions of fine Germans



*"You are carrying the great burden of history on your shoulders every day you serve in Iraq."*

living in Hitler's Germany was to understanding World War II.

It is not the fine Muslims who rule most Muslim countries, some of which are among the cruelest on earth. It is not the fine Muslims who dominate the Islamic schools around the world that teach that it is right to subjugate women and to slit Christians' and Jews' throats. It is not the fine Muslims who wish to impose a violent, hate-filled religion on others. It is not the fine Muslims who burned 13 churches in Nigeria last November.

And sadly, most of the fine Muslims, including those in America, rarely condemn their civilization-threatening co-religionists.

Iraq is the battleground for civilization. That is why our enemies are throwing everything they can at you. If you help create the first free and tolerant Arab country in the heart of Islam, they are doomed. If we fail in Iraq, we are doomed. Our enemies know this. We need to know this.

Second, don't be discouraged by America's relative aloneness in the world. The world is not, by and large, a good place. And the

United Nations, which reflects the world, reflects that fact. That is why Libya, a police state that ordered the mass murder known as the 1988 bombing of Pan-Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, is not only on the U.N. Human Rights Commission, it is the head of the commission. And Syria, which is worse than Libya, judges us on the Security Council.

As for Europe, Britain and a few other Western states aside, the folks who gave us Auschwitz and communism and who now bankroll Iran and North Korea hardly have a claim to moral superiority. Americans like you died for their errors. They never died for ours. And they err again. Instead of learning to fight evil, they have only learned that fighting is evil.

Third, we Americans are relatively alone because from our founding we have believed that we have a mission to better the world. And for this we are hated. We are not hated for our power; we are hated for our values and our sense of chosenness – just as the never-powerful Jews have long been hated for their values and their chosenness.

In sum, you are carrying the great burden of history on your shoulders every day you serve in Iraq. That some of your fellow citizens do not understand this only means that the war for civilization is taking place as much here at home as it is in Iraq.

We pray for you not only because you are our sons and daughters risking your lives, but because if God is good, and if we humans can discern between good and evil, you are doing God's work. It is as clear as that. No American war has ever been clearer. 🌿

*Dennis Prager is a syndicated radio talk-show host and columnist. He can be contacted at [www.dennisprager.com](http://www.dennisprager.com)*

**ABOVE:** A member of the 173rd Airborne Brigade mans a defensive fighting position on the streets of Al Hawijah during Operation Iraqi Freedom. **U.S. Air Force**



A silver Jeep Trail Rated is shown from a rear three-quarter view, driving through a dense field of fallen logs and branches on a dirt road. The vehicle is kicking up a cloud of dust. In the foreground, the rear portion of a red Jeep is visible, also on the log-strewn path. The background shows a wooded area with trees and shrubs.

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Photo taken from NATC testing.



|                                                                                     |                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|   | <b>Traction</b>         |
|   | <b>Articulation</b>     |
|   | <b>Ground Clearance</b> |
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Photo taken from NATC testing.



|                                                                                     |                  |
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Interior Secretary Gale Norton inspects Kaktovik Inupiat Corp. Well No. 1, marked by a pipe protruding from the coastal plain, at the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. Norton supports President Bush's planned use of revenues from the refuge's new oil leases to offset deficits. **AP**

## *Interior Secretary Gale Norton aims to unite the government and the public in preserving America's natural heritage.*

**The American Legion Magazine:** *What are some of the most important issues facing your department today?*

**Gale Norton:** We are changing to a new philosophy, a new approach of cooperation and conservation, where we encourage people to work with us to conserve the environment.

**TALM:** *How is this different from before?*

**GN:** We have made great progress with environmental laws that have been on the books for several decades. But there is a limit to what these laws can accomplish. We want to capture people's enthusiasm in such a way that they will help us to conserve and improve the environment.

**TALM:** *How does this work?*

**GN:** In terms of wildlife, for example, the Endangered Species Act has been a tremendous controversy. It is important, though, to guard endangered wildlife. This applies to public and private land. We have certain rules in place for public land. On private land, we are taking a new approach. Instead of saying we have mandatory restrictions applying to everyone's land because there might be endangered species, we work with the landowners to take a positive approach. With the Landowner Incentive Program, we work with landowners to improve habitats on their properties.

**TALM:** *What types of projects do these programs cover?*

**GN:** One project is in Texas, where the Aplomado Falcon declined to fewer than 100 pairs of birds nesting in the wild. The Peregrine Fund has been working with private landowners to restore that bird, as they have with the peregrines. We work with private landowners to welcome falcons on their land. If we had gone in with mandatory, punishable restrictions, people would be scared to death of finding falcons on their land. Now, people are delighted to find a falcon nest. There are still criminal penalties if people shoot endangered birds, but for real success in recovering a species, the positive approach is critically important.

**TALM:** *How else are you resolving issues through cooperation?*



As the nation's federal steward of conservation, the 155-year-old Department of the Interior manages precious natural resources and public lands. With an annual budget of some \$13 billion, Interior manages 507 million acres of surface land, or approximately one-fifth of the land in the United States. Specific responsibilities range from habitat restoration and national park management to honoring federal trust agreements with American Indians and island communities.

In the process of carrying out its duties, the Department of the Interior often finds itself at the fulcrum of controversy over environmental management. Conflict can be avoided, Interior Secretary Gale Norton says, through active partnerships between the government and the private sector. A lifelong conservationist and former attorney general of Colorado, Norton has created numerous public-private relationships that encourage a shared sense of proprietorship in the monumental trust of preserving our nation's natural heritage. She recently explained these and other issues to *The American Legion Magazine*.

**GN:** Water in the West has been a major issue for us. The issue revolved around how to apportion Colorado River water to the seven states of the Colorado River Basin. California had been overusing its authorized share of the water. The other states feared that if this issue weren't resolved, California's overuse could become a permanent right. I am pleased to report that in October, we resolved that issue. The warring parties have agreed on how to allocate water in California. This sets the stage for California to come within its legal share from the Colorado River basin. If we can resolve longstanding agreements on who owns what water, and if everyone knows what they own, they can cooperate and plan for the future.

**TALM:** *How is the nation's water supply?*

**GN:** There is no more water than before. There is a widespread drought now in the West, so people are focused on water. We want to keep that focus even after the rain comes. If not, what we are seeing in dry years will become what we have normally. This is a very important issue.

**TALM:** *How can we ensure that everyone will have enough water?*

**GN:** Market solutions like water banking or water-trading mecha-

nisms are very beneficial. They have to be done the right way, and a lot of work has to be done. Extra water can be leased to cities with growing populations. There are a number of examples in the West, where agricultural water can be used better. We want to encourage conservation. A number of golf courses are watered with recycled water. That makes sense. We support efforts in some areas to encourage people to convert away from Kentucky bluegrass lawns. In the arid Southwest, those lawns don't make sense. In Las Vegas, they are paying people to rip out their lawns and replace them with vegetation suited to an arid climate. This saves huge amounts of water. It makes sense in Las Vegas, but maybe not in other places. We don't want to mandate these approaches, but we want to encourage an exchange of ideas.

**TALM:** *What is being done on a larger scale?*

**GN:** Water purifying and recycling is part of the solution, but desalination has more of a future. We have just returned from a conference on how technology can help us get through these types of issues, and it emerged that desalination is one of the best. It works in coastal areas and inland, where groundwater is of low quality.

**TALM:** *What have we learned from the recent fires in California?*

**GN:** We need to more actively manage our forest and other public lands to minimize fire damage. The chaparral lands where much of the danger occurred need to be addressed. Our agency has established the Healthy Forests Initiative. This is about all healthy vegetation, not just big trees. We have to deal with all types of ecosystems that have become more fire-prone in recent decades. In southern California, the areas where the fires took place are areas that used to burn frequently. Fires went through there often. They were not as intense because the frequent fires cleared out the underbrush. Now there is a big buildup of underbrush. The trees are much more dense. A fire is much hotter now and more catastrophic. In Colorado some years ago, the Hayman fire was hot enough to melt lead. Now that people live in the middle of the forest, we need to thin out the forest and areas around homes.

**TALM:** *How can we thin out the vegetation?*

**GN:** Controlled burning is one tool we use frequently. We use it as a fire-management tool in areas not as close to communities.



**TALM:** *Doesn't controlled burning create a problem with air pollution?*

**GN:** Our laws tend to focus on the short-term effects of taking action. Air-quality issues that arise from controlled burning focus on that. In a huge fire like we saw in the West, there were more air-quality impacts than there would have been from a small prescribed burn. You choose the days when you do a prescribed burn. You can't choose the day when a forest fire breaks out. Again, the forest fires bring catastrophic damage – not just to people's homes and businesses but also to wildlife. We have seen hundreds of thousands of acres of habitats burn in the last few years. We also have seen habitats diminish from improper forest management. Controlled burning helps those habitats. Many species evolve when the forest is less dense. They benefit from open meadows. As the trees become more dense, those species are crowded out. We are restoring that ecosystem.

**TALM:** *Your office previously has said that energy is the cornerstone of our nation's economy. What is our energy situation?*

**GN:** We are consuming far more energy than we produce. Foreign imports of natural gas will not meet increased needs in the future.

**TALM:** *How can we resolve that?*

**GN:** We can follow the president's National Energy Policy, which encourages development of a cleaner and more diverse portfolio of renewable energy sources.

**TALM:** *What in particular?*

**GN:** The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. It has the largest untapped reserve of oil in the United States.

**TALM:** *Does it enhance our security if we produce our own energy?*

**GN:** Yes. We need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil and develop our energy in a manner that is consistent with environmental protection. That project

has been supported by a number of veterans groups, including The American Legion.

**TALM:** *Here at home, how do we coordinate military interests with environmental interests?*

**GN:** Some of our most open space is on military land. I have met with a number of military people on endangered-species issues, and how we can work together to promote both conservation and military readiness. What I have found is that many of our military bases have the best plans and projects in place for protecting endangered species.

**TALM:** *Some 150 national-park units underlie training routes used by the Air Force. In instances where environmental concerns conflict with training, do you make sure that the Defense Department and the National Park Service are both able to accomplish their objectives?*

**GN:** We have developed a new tool to improve cooperation. The Western Pacific Regional Sourcebook fosters communication and promotes the building of relationships between Air Force airspace managers and National Park Service park managers. Many partners from federal agencies and the private sector came together to put the handbook into motion. It's a good example of cooperating and listening to ensure our shared goals.

**TALM:** *What is the condition of our national parks?*

**GN:** We are in the process of finishing our nationwide assessment on the condition of our parks. President Bush has made restoring our parks one of his commitments. In the past, we had no way to evaluate pressing needs in the parks. Now that system is in place. We are addressing a \$4.9 billion maintenance backlog. The backlog includes things such as broken irrigation systems, poorly maintained trails and buildings in disrepair. We have completed 900 projects so far, and we have another 900 set to begin in the coming year.

**TALM:** *Within the parks themselves, how do we balance conservation with recreation?*

**GN:** That question has been at the heart of park-service management for decades. The National Park Service has two missions: public enjoyment and preservation. We work hard to address both of those. We are working to get the public involved in helping us to accomplish both of the missions. Every time people pay a fee to go to a park, that money goes to help with projects in the parks. People are willing to pay to see an interpretive exhibit or a new building facility. It benefits them and it helps with preservation.

**TALM:** *How do you address concerns about public safety in the parks?*

**GN:** We are the wild world. We cannot make people safe from the outdoors. But we can educate people about the outdoors. At Yellowstone National Park, people used to feed the bears. The bears were encouraged to interact with people. That was dangerous for the people and bad for the bears. Today we know it is more important to educate people on the dangers while allowing them to experience nature. A good example of how to do this is at Katmai National Park in Alaska. The park has a waterfall where lots of salmon swim through. The bears go to the waterfall to feed. When people go there, they get a stern lecture on how to behave around the bears. And they can stand on a viewing platform and watch the grizzlies catch salmon. If we wanted everything to be safe, the safety experts would say you shouldn't allow that kind of opportunity. But it is phenomenal to watch these grizzlies and see them in their natural environment. And this is the type of activity that helps spark that enthusiasm we are looking for, that enthusiasm for the natural world that inspires people to want to help conserve our wonderful natural resources. 🌲

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*

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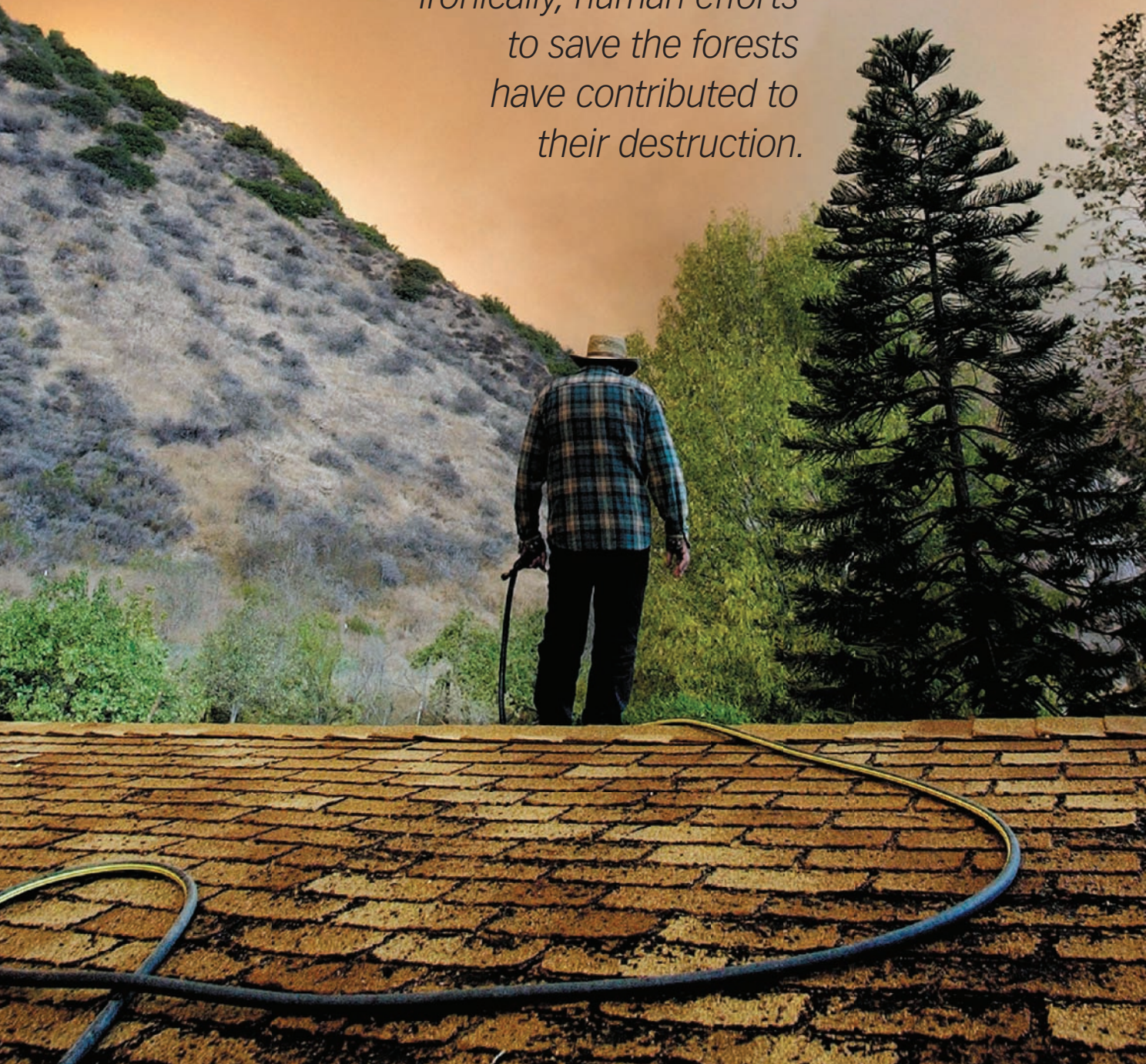
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# F• Trial by Fires

*Ironically, human efforts  
to save the forests  
have contributed to  
their destruction.*





*National forests deprived of fire for the past century are simply overgrown and ready to burn with ferocity.*



**LEFT:** Dead trees ravaged by bark beetles cover a hillside at Lake Arrowhead, Calif. Infestation left the southern California community vulnerable to the devastating fires that swept the region last fall. **AP**

**FACING PAGE:** Bob McCary wets down his roof as he watches smoke from the Piru fire rise from Hopper's Canyon in Fillmore, Calif., in October. **AP**

**BY TOM GRIGGS**

Los Angeles County firefighter Dennis Walsh traveled south to Camp Pendleton, Calif., in September 1988 to train Marines. He didn't go to teach them patrolling techniques or small-unit tactics. Walsh and other county firefighters were under orders to give the battalion a crash course in fighting wild-land fires.

In a matter of days, Walsh and his leathernecks boarded an Air Force C-5A Galaxy jet transport and headed toward America's beloved Yellowstone National Park. The park – which Congress set aside in 1872 for the American public – was literally burning down.

The Marines and a contingent of soldiers joined thousands of firefighters battling a blaze that had been burning since July. More than 150,000 acres burned on Aug. 20 alone, the worst day of the fire.

By the time Walsh and his troops arrived, "the fire was still burning, but not like in the summer. We faced lodgepole pines that were thick, growing densely, burning with ferocity, taking out two to three acres at a time, creating immense heat. Then it would die down, and we'd try to cut lines around the fire."

September also brought the first help from weather conditions. "We got some snow, and the fire started to lay down somewhat," Walsh recounts.

The southern California firefighters finally returned home in mid-October. The Yellowstone fires burned until November. They blackened some 1.2 million acres, 793,000 acres of which were inside the 2,221,800-acre park. More than 25,000 firefighters faced the flames during the four-month blaze.

**Overgrown.** Since Yellowstone, fires in the West have become ever more prevalent and dangerous. Each year seems to bring warnings of worse conditions and new premonitions of catastrophe. Foresters say the problem is simple: our forests are too congested. National forests that have experienced an absence of fire for the past century are simply overgrown and ready to burn with ferocity. What once cleansed the forests now burns them down.

Huge fires burned all over the West during the first few years of the new century, especially 2000 and 2002. Last year, the number of fires dropped, and it looked as if 2003 might actually be a light

year. Then came the southern California fires of October and November. Whipped by the strong Santa Ana winds, they torched 750,000 acres and destroyed 3,650 homes. Twenty-two people died.

The tragic blazes also provided a final push forward for the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, or the Healthy Forests Initiative, which President Bush signed Dec. 3. The law had been mired in Congress for three years.

"With the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, we will help to prevent catastrophic wildfires, we'll help save lives and property, and we'll help protect our forests from sudden and needless destruction," Bush said upon signing the bill into law.

The act allows thinning of national forests without the environmental reviews and appeals that slowed or stopped such projects before.

"The Healthy Forests Initiative act has done what hasn't been done in two-and-a-half decades: deal with the problem in our forests," says Thomas Bonnicksen, a forest ecologist and Texas A&M professor who aggressively supported its passing.

Bonnicksen says today's forests are susceptible to deadly bark-



beetle infestation and monstrous fires because they are naturally overgrown and way out of sync with what was normal a century, or even half a century, ago.

Bonnicksen, a six-year Navy veteran who is now considered an authority on forest health and forest history, has focused much time and effort on one southern California national forest and a community in the middle of it.

Lake Arrowhead and the San Bernardino National Forest are less than 100 miles from Los Angeles. Many motion pictures have been filmed at the lake. Shirley Temple played the role of "Heidi" not in the Alps of Switzerland but among the peaks around Lake Arrowhead. More recently, when Michael Douglas played "The American President," the Marine One helicopter descended not at Camp David, but onto the UCLA Conference Center grounds on the shores of Lake Arrowhead. Anyone watching the 6 o'clock news at the end of October watched firefighters battle gigantic flames to save the town, which was expected to burn completely.

Only the heroics of firefighters saved it. "It was thanks to the raw guts and determination of firefighters, men and women, who fought to keep that fire out of there," says San Bernardino County Fire Marshal Peter Brierty, who had warned authorities for some time about the looming danger. "People say the weather stopped it. Firefighters stopped it."

"Surrounded by towering pines, Lake Arrowhead's beauty is unsurpassed," a Lake Arrowhead Communities Chamber of Commerce publication stated 10 years ago, beckoning visitors to the "cool, clear waters" of the lake.

Today, the residents are worried about being surrounded by towering flames. The majority of the community's ponderosa and Coulter pines are dead or dying. Ponderosas are the dominant tree in the Lake Arrowhead area, in



Pine-bark beetle larvae have eaten away at southern California's drought-weakened trees. As a result, large portions of the state suffered damage in last year's massive fires. **AP**

the western San Bernardinos. The aesthetic loss is significant, but residents and public-safety agencies are more concerned with the dangers presented by thousands of dead ponderosas, which could fall on people and houses, across roads and power lines.

The community is besieged now – and will be for several years – by professional tree-cutters. Chainsaws can be heard anywhere in the town, any time of the day. Brierty commends the residents. "Citizens have removed more trees than all government agencies combined," he notes.

Meanwhile, fire could roar into the lake town and its adjacent communities from any direction. The residential areas are surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest, one of the most diverse of America's 195 national forests. But it is dying. Ravenous bark beetles have killed 50 percent of the trees in the forest, Bonnicksen says, adding that he fully expects 90 percent will be dead or dying by the end of this year.

Richard Minnick, an earth-sciences professor at the University of California at Riverside, in nearby Riverside County, says the attack by the western pine beetle is unprecedented.

"I don't think it could be worse," Minnick says. "The mortality of trees is absolutely catastrophic. A breakout of insects like this has never been seen. It's beyond belief."

"We're experiencing the result of 100 years of forest protection, particularly in the mixed-conifer

part of the forest," says Gene Zimmerman, San Bernardino National Forest supervisor. "There are too many trees competing for too little water. That makes them susceptible to pathogens like the bark beetles. That's why we're seeing high percentages of mortality."

Minnick says the beetles have always been a part of the forest, but healthy trees can fight off beetle attacks. Weak and stressed, trees in the San Bernardino National Forest

aren't able to "pitch out" the beetles.

One factor has been southern California's ongoing drought. The year of 2002 "was the driest on record, and it followed three dry years," Minnick says.

Some Forest Service personnel also point to the stress from photochemical smog, which comes out of the Los Angeles basin and makes its way into the mountain forest.

The main problem is tree density, Bonnicksen says – too many trees and too little water. He says taking away the drought and ozone factors would not have saved those ponderosa and Coulter pines, because 400 to 500 trees are growing per acre instead of 50, which is natural.

### Rebuilding the Ecosystem.

Before the nation was settled, lightning started fires that systematically burned across forest floors, removing small and weak trees and brush and grasses, leaving the large hearty trees. Those trees had plenty of water and nutrients, even in times of drought. Bonnicksen says American Indians purposely set fires to produce the same results.

However, as the nation developed and the population increased, people moved closer to the hinterlands, closer to our forests. Today, it's called the urban-wildland interface. Suddenly, fire suppression became part of forest management – an unnatural part. The absence of fire led to the buildup of what foresters and firefighters call



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Fire roared through the Lake Arrowhead, Calif., community of Cedar Glen last October, consuming hundreds of trees and destroying as many as 300 homes. **AP**

fuels – the debris and growth on the forest floor and understory that can burn with intensity and kill the large, hearty trees. After a century of this, forests are off track and in danger.

“Rebuilding the ecosystem is the most significant challenge for the next decade,” U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth says. “It’s a forest problem, not a fire problem.”

Bosworth made that statement during a House Resources Committee hearing last December, just two days after the president signed the Healthy Forests Initiative. The hearing took place Dec. 5, appropriately, at Lake Arrowhead. “We’re the poster child for forest management gone sour,” Zimmerman says.

The San Bernardino Forest supervisor says much work needs to be accomplished over the next decade. “First we have to reduce the hazard of our dying trees,” he says. “At the same time, we are working on shaded fuel breaks around the communities. That’s more than 440 miles of urban-wildland interface. Then we’ll step back a little deeper and manage fuel buildup there.”

Zimmerman says that prescribed or controlled burning can eventually be conducted to replicate the function that fire played before.

Because it takes away their ability to appeal forest-management projects, the Healthy Forests Initiative has not been received well by many environmental groups and activists.

Bonnicksen says those appeals, along with cutting restrictions and fire suppression, are what put forests in their predicament. He contends that while activists, government officials and politicians were debating, forest management stalled and forests grew thicker.

“I’m frustrated,” says Monica Bond, a staff biologist at the Center for Biological Diversity, a nonprofit organization of biologists and lawyers. “Our right to appeal projects has been taken away from us. (The Healthy Forest Initiative) has cut us out of the public review part of the process.”

Bond said she worries that Forest Service thinning projects could become logging projects.

Indeed, the Forest Service will have to contract out forest thinning projects to the logging industry. Bond wants to see that lumber companies don’t go in and cut all the big trees and leave slash, or fuel, on the ground. She says that’s what starts and spreads fire and carries it with intensity. Cutting can make the fire situation worse, she warns.

San Bernardino National Forest public affairs officer Ruth Wen-

strom says the Healthy Forests Initiative requires that projects involve the communities up front. The appeals process has been eliminated, but community input is still important, she says, adding, “We want to bring together people at opposite ends of the spectrum.”

Wenstrom says her national forest is looking at meeting the needs of the forest and the public. “How do we use it so we don’t violate the public trust and at the same time bring back healthy forests?” Wenstrom asks. “This is not an excuse to cut trees. The challenge is what we want our forest to be, not be focused on which logs bring the most money.”

Located in Idyllwild, Calif., in the southern reaches of the San Bernardino National Forest area, the Center for Biological Diversity is a conservation group that focuses on biodiversity and threatened and endangered species, Bond says. She adds that the organization supports fuel reduction work, if it is carried out properly. “We’ve never said, ‘Don’t touch the forest,’” she contends, although the center does not approve of thinning in spotted-owl habitat, for example.

Bonnicksen questions the sense of that, because he believes the center is addressing only nesting habitat. He questions the availability of owl prey in today’s overgrown forests – such as flying squirrels and dusky-footed wood rats.

Our forests are much different today than they were 200 years ago, but an understanding of their complexion then is essential to their management now.

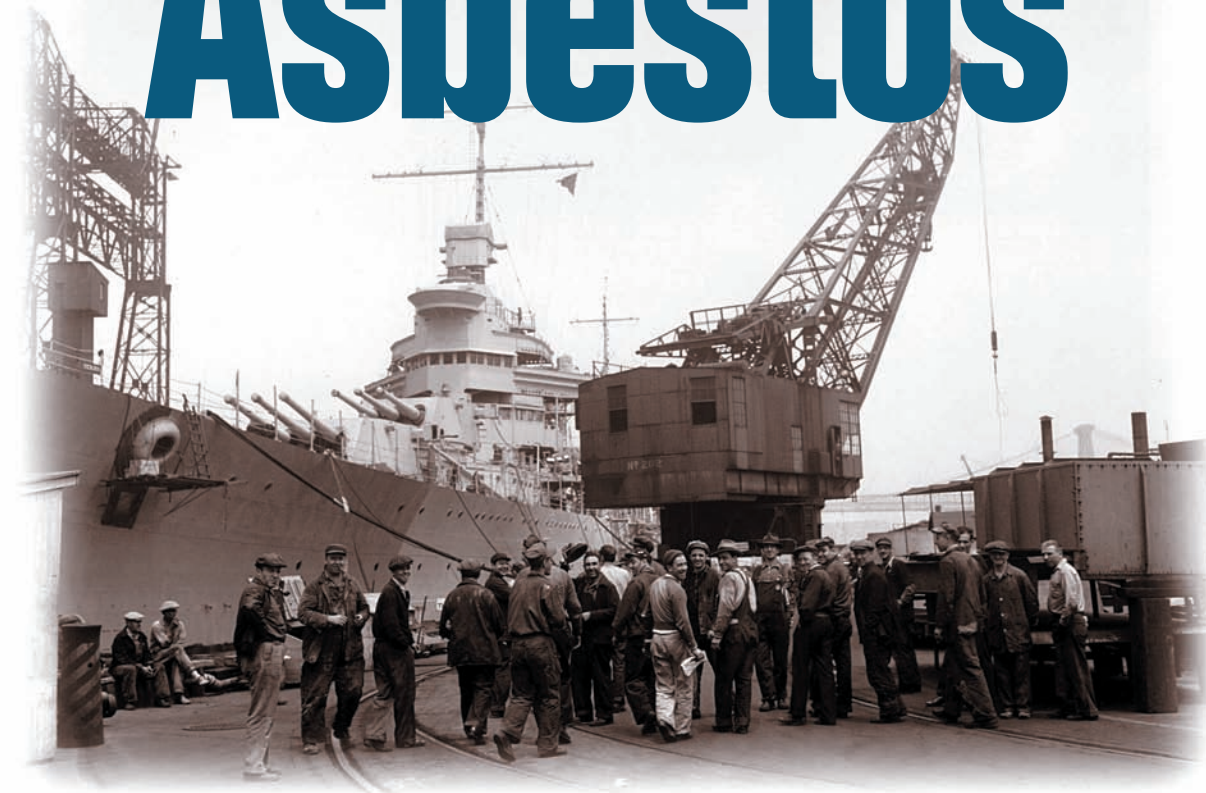
“If we don’t know our history, we don’t know our future,” he says. “If we don’t know the history of our forests and brushlands, we cannot possibly control their future.” 🌿

*Formerly an outdoor guide in the San Bernardino Mountains, Tom Griggs is on the editorial staff of the Daily Press in Victorville, Calif.*

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*

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# Music City USA

*Nashville plays host for the 86th National Convention.*

BY JAMES V. CARROLL

Nashville, Tenn., is a southern city proud of its history and culture, famous for its sons and daughters, the world's only full-scale replica of the Parthenon and, of course, its music, which makes it a magnet for barbecue-toting waiters, emergency medical technicians and tour-bus drivers who dream of making it big writing, singing or playing their songs.

Musicians, songwriters, artists, publicists, agents and producers are the heart and soul of Nashville. Elvis Presley recorded "Heartbreak Hotel" here. Jimmy Buffett recorded "Margaritaville," and Roger Miller pressed "King of



Food and music share center stage at many city restaurants. **James V. Carroll**

"The Road" in Nashville. Harry Connick Jr., Yo-Yo Ma, Bob Seger and Matchbox 20 all have recorded hits in the city, which has listed among its residents Natalie Cole, Michael W. Smith, Amy Grant, Alan Jackson, Michael McDonald, Richard Marx and Peter Frampton.

Long before Nashville became known as Music City USA, it was known as the Athens of the South. The Parthenon, in the city's Centennial Park, was originally built for Tennessee's 1897 Centennial Exposition to commemorate the city's dedication to education.

Amid this eclectic tableau, 15,000 members of the American Legion family will gather Aug. 27 to Sept. 2 for the 86th American Legion National Convention.

**Activities Unlimited.** Nashville offers its visitors a wide range



Aspiring musicians often play for tips in Nashville's honky tonks. **James V. Carroll**

of attractions. Fort Nashborough is a replica of the original settlement on the banks of the Cumberland River. President Andrew Jackson's home, the Hermitage, also links visitors to the city's heritage. Frist Center for the Visual Arts and Vanderbilt University's Fine Arts Gallery add to Nashville's cultural cache. Cheekwood Botanical Gardens and the Nashville Zoo provide visitors an up-close look at local flora and worldwide fauna.



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Outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy public parks or take leisurely walks along the banks of the Cumberland River, which winds its way through the city.

Capitol Mall State Park near the State Capitol in downtown takes visitors on the Pathway of History – a 1,400-foot-long wall chronologically mapping Tennessee milestones. Other Mall features include a 200-foot granite map and walkway depicting the state's 95 counties with dancing fountains representing Tennessee's 31 major rivers.

The Tennessee World War II Memorial also is located in the Capitol Mall State Park. The memorial is a rectangular granite plaza surrounded by 10 pylons detailing in words and photographs important events during the war. A centerpiece of the memorial is a 9-ton solid granite globe that floats on a thin cushion of water. The globe depicts various battle sites during the war.

Veterans also might want to visit the military history branch of the Tennessee State Museum. It features America's involvement in military conflicts from the Spanish-American War to World War II. Exhibits include battle histories, weapons and a uniform, worn by World War I Medal of Honor recipient Sgt. Alvin York, a rural Tennessee native. A bronze statute of Sgt. York can be found on the lawn of the State Capitol.



Grand Ole Opry visitors and guests can enjoy the hotel's indoor canal aboard delta boats.

*James V. Carroll*

**Music is King.** Any discussion of the Nashville music scene is incomplete without mentioning Ryman Auditorium, “Mother Church” of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974. Before the Opry years, Ryman was home to religious revivals, jazz gigs, operas, boxing matches, political debates and livestock auctions. Today, the restored auditorium is once again a premier musical performance venue. A National Historic Landmark, Ryman continues to pay tribute to its star-studded entertainment history by offering daytime self-guided tours.

Grand Ole Opry, Ryman's most famous tenant, today has its own venue on Opryland Drive. Live performances are broadcast via radio and Internet each weekend.

**Shopping and Dining.** Shopping malls dot the Nashville area landscape, affording casual and discriminating shoppers alike perfect hunting grounds to find souvenirs and gifts.

Nashville's restaurants, grills and coffee shops offer hungry shoppers internationally inspired menus. Cajun, Chinese, Mediterranean and French dining venues complement Irish, Italian, Japanese, Mexican and German restaurant establishments. Steakhouses, pizza parlors, seafood and specialty eateries beckon hungry passersby from most every downtown street. Unique neighborhood restaurants also offer superb dining.

Dozens of restaurants are within walking distance of downtown hotels, including the Wildhorse Saloon, a world-famous 66,000-square-foot live-music venue featuring “taste bud entertainment.” Also in the district is Hard Rock Café for folks who prefer rock over country.

While at Opry Mills Shopping



A map of World War II battle sites is engraved on a floating 9-ton globe at Capitol Mall State Park. *James V. Carroll*

Center, music enthusiasts might wish to visit the Bluegrass Showcase, home of Gibson's original acoustic instrument division. On any given day, you can observe craftsmen building more than 100 years of tradition into every Gibson mandolin, banjo and Dobro resonator guitar.

A short walk from the Showcase is the Grand Ole Opry complex, including its theater, the Grand Ole Opry Museum and Grand Ole Opry Hotel.

A Nashville tour is incomplete without a visit to the new Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, a tribute to the sound and culture of Nashville. Unique are the museum's custom CD-burning stations, which permit visitors to assemble some of their favorite songs on a CD.

The only downside of a convention in Nashville is lack of enough time to see and do everything the city has to offer. But the national treasure that is Music City USA will happily welcome visitors for longer tours and return engagements. 🍷

*James V. Carroll is an assistant editor at The American Legion Magazine.*

*Article design: Doug Rollison*



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# Operation Torch

*Early victory gave fresh U.S. troops momentum in World War II.*



Allied planes bombard the French battleship *Jean Bart* at Casablanca as French troops resisted the North African landings in 1942. *Corbis*

**BY KAY GRANT**

During World War II, Allied forces had campaigns working on several fronts, in places many Americans had never heard of: Oran, Port Lyautey, and Tlemcen, to name a few. At home, folks struggled with gas and food rations and blackouts, and Japanese-Americans were relocated to internment

camps. World War II touched the lives of all Americans, whether they were in El Alamein or El Paso, Midway or Miami, New Guinea or New Rochelle.

In late 1942, Hitler's forces ran rampant in Europe, repelling the Russian Army, taking control of much of the Mediterranean and wresting the French possessions

in North Africa. After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, necessitating that the United States take action, President Franklin Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to confront German forces before taking on Japan.

Churchill and Roosevelt favored going into North Africa over the

Soviet Union's lobbying for a second European front. Dwight D. Eisenhower, then a 52-year-old lieutenant general, was appointed Allied commander for the new invasion. Code-named Operation Torch, it would be the largest amphibious operation ever attempted. Plans were to strike in three locations: Casablanca, Oran and Algiers. These territories were ostensibly controlled by Vichy France, with approximately 60,000 troops in place.

PFC Charlie LiBretto, 22, was on the maiden voyage of the USS *George Clymer*. "We knew we were going into battle but didn't know where," LiBretto recalled. "When we heard we were landing in North Africa, we wondered what was there besides animals. When you think of Africa, you think of animals."

An ammunition truck driver with the 60th Infantry Intelligence Reconnaissance, LiBretto landed at Port Lyautey on Nov. 8, the onset of Torch. "The French focused a powerful searchlight on us as we landed. We shot at it and knocked it out," LiBretto said. "It was rainy and slippery on shore, but everybody seemed to be in pretty good spirits. We didn't even know if the French would fight." But fight they did. "In three days we lost more than 100 men."

Maj. Gen. George S. Patton commanded the 35,000-troop Western Task Force, which was to capture Casablanca and Port Lyautey in French Morocco. Safi was easily captured on the first day, and within two days beachheads at Casablanca and other North African points were secured. By Nov. 10 the French resistance at Port Lyautey had disintegrated.

The Center Naval Task Force, under the command of Maj. Gen. Lloyd Fredendall, was to capture Oran. The 39,000 American troops, along with British ships, met strong resistance. Still, they were able to capture an airfield and start flying Spitfires from it.

**Bittersweet Memories.** George Rumney was a 31-year-old Air Force chaplain with the 320th

*"When you bury them  
and you weep with  
them and you share  
with them, you don't  
forget them."*

— George Rumney,  
former Air Force chaplain  
for the 320th Bomb Group, Tampa, Fla.

Bomb Group out of Tampa, Fla., who traveled with the ground crew from New York via the *Queen Mary* (then a troop ship) to England and on to Oran with the invasion forces. There was no fighting at the time Rumney landed. "The French had given up, and the Germans were on the other side of the mountain," Rumney recalled.

For a while he became chaplain for an air-depot group in Casablanca. "At that time, it was the biggest airport in the world," he said.

Rumney later served as national chaplain of The American Legion and three times as the Virginia state chaplain.

Now 92 years old and living in Virginia, he has bittersweet memories of his time in the military. "I left labor and body in North Africa. When you bury them and you weep with them and you share with them, you don't forget them."

The Eastern Task Force, led by Maj. Gen. Charles Ryder, landed at Algiers and quickly occupied the town. But the Allies were at a disadvantage. German troops had use of French airfields and good runways while the Allies had to use more distant, temporary facilities. The Germans fought intensely, but the American and British forces were able to overpower them. By spring 1943, the Allies outnumbered the Axis by a 6-to-1 advantage and had obstructed German supply lines.

Gen. Omar Bradley, who had replaced Patton, and Gen. Bernard Montgomery led a 300,000-man force on to Tunis.

**On-the-Job Training.** Morton Wolk, now living in California, was fresh out of Carnegie Tech with an ROTC commission of second lieutenant when he was deployed to Africa as a battalion motor maintenance officer with the 15th Combat Engineer Battalion, arriving on Christmas Eve 1942. Looking back, he doesn't remember being scared as his ship sailed out of New York Harbor. "I think we were just wondering what was in store for us. We didn't have enough experience to be scared.

"I remember we started across North Africa at a leisurely pace to join the British 1st Army in Tunisia," Wolk said. "We spent the night in Tlemcen, Algeria. A call came in that the Germans had broken through at Kasserine Pass and the Allies needed our artillery right away. We pulled camp and proceeded quickly to Tunisia. By this time, we had a little more experience. I heard that the Germans couldn't believe the American troops they saw 200 miles south could meet them again 10 days later 200 miles north. That's how fast we moved."

By May 1943, Tunis fell to British forces, and 150,000 Axis troops surrendered and were taken prisoner. The North African invasion was a success.

As Norman Gelb stated in "Desperate Venture: The Story of Operation Torch, the Allied Invasion of North Africa," "The Allies now had complete control of North Africa from the Atlantic to the Red Sea. Operation Torch's mission had been brought to a successful conclusion."

The wet-behind-the-ears American forces had arrived in North Africa with little experience and a big mission: to defeat the Axis forces. They learned quickly and at great cost, but their time with Operation Torch proved to be invaluable on-the-job training for Sicily and other battles to come. 🌿

*Kay Grant is a freelance writer living in California.*

*Article design: King Doxsee*





# Baghdad's Untold Story

*America's successes in reconstruction of Iraq get no salute from media.*

**BY ALAN W. DOWD**

**S**addam Hussein ruled Iraq for almost 24 years – longer than Hitler controlled Germany, longer than Tojo dominated Japan. During that quarter-century, neither the Iraqi people nor their neighbors knew a day of peace. Saddam's wars scarred Iran, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Israel. His internal terror decimated the Kurdish minority in northern Iraq and the Shiite majority in southern Iraq, transforming the cradle of civilization into a giant torture chamber.

Yet less than a year after the

liberation of Iraq, the U.S.-led coalition has come under heavy fire – literally and figuratively – for its inability to fix all the problems and purge all the evils unleashed between July 1979 and May 2003. The impatience and fury of the Iraqi people is understandable, even predictable, given the hell they have endured. What is not understandable is the impatience and doom-saying of American pundits and politicians.

"If it bleeds, it leads," the time-honored media maxim declares. So, our newspapers and newscasts are full of stories about car bombings and quagmires rather

than the impressive milestones of Iraq's reconstruction.

Some perspective is in order. As the hole in the Manhattan skyline reminds us, it is far easier to destroy something than to repair it.

**The Whole Story.** Playing every role from detective to diplomat to de-facto mayor, U.S. forces are carrying out a multifaceted mission of staggering scope: they search for weapons of mass destruction, seal the borders, provide basic public services, prevent civil war, apprehend regime leaders, protect diplomats,

Maj. Gen. David Petraeus of the 101st Airborne Division, Air Assault, cuts the ceremonial ribbon at the grand opening of the Al Hasoodia School in Kanash, Iraq.  
**U.S. Army**

hunt al-Qaida and Saddam's leftovers, rebuild roads and bridges. And as if that weren't enough, they are laying the foundations for something truly revolutionary: the first democracy in the Arab world.

Toward that end, the Iraqi Governing Council has sketched the outlines of a "Fundamental Law." It includes a bill of rights protecting freedom of speech and religion and guaranteeing due process. It balances the power of the central government with regional governorates, or provinces. It ensures civilian control over the Iraqi armed forces. And it envisions an independent judiciary. Already, 95 percent of Iraqi courts are functioning. In fact, the coalition has approved more than 600 Iraqi judges who are presiding over 500 different courts.

By summer, each of Iraq's 18 governorates will elect representatives for a transitional assembly to carry Iraq from allied stewardship to full independence. As postwar Iraq moves through these phases of maturity and sovereignty, the Iraqis will develop a permanent constitution that will be an outgrowth of the Fundamental Law. The new constitution will be presented to the Iraqi people in a referendum sometime in 2005.

However, the fruits of America's efforts in Iraq are not just words written on paper and promises made behind podiums, but tangible signs of progress, as the Coalition Provisional Authority, Pentagon and State Department detail every day in print and on the Web – if only the press and politicians cared enough to read the whole story.

■ On a fast track to representative government, the Iraqi people have created neighborhood and city councils all across the country. The city council in Baghdad, for example, reflects the full cross-section of the Iraqi populace: Sunnis and Shias, Arabs and Kurds, men and

women, even Christians.

■ Since November, Iraq's vital port at Umm Qasr has been receiving grain-laden cargo ships.

■ More than 240 hospitals and 1,200 clinics have reopened. They have administered more than 22 million vaccinations to Iraqi children. U.S. and coalition military units work with local physicians and nurses to set up clinics that provide health care even in Iraq's most backwater villages and neighborhoods.

■ Iraq's 22 universities and 43 technical institutes have been de-Baathified and reopened, as have 1,500 elementary schools. Some 64,000 teachers and 5,000 principals have been vetted, retrained and put to work in Iraq's schools. A "teach-the-teacher" program has recruited hundreds of Iraqis to train another 81,000 educators in post-Baathist teaching methods. And by the end of Iraq's first school year after Saddam, the coalition will have distributed 72 million new textbooks.

■ Iraq now has 150 independent newspapers and counting.

■ Iraq is now generating enough oil to meet its own domestic consumption and is exporting 1.5 million barrels a day. In the span of a few months, a free Iraq generated \$2 billion from oil sales.

■ Electrical power generation is now well above prewar levels.

■ Indeed, U.S. forces have retrained and deployed more than 48,000 Iraqis to

protect the power grid and water supply, 60,000 new Iraqi security personnel, 12,000 border-patrol guards and a full battalion of soldiers. In fact, Iraq now accounts for the second-largest contingent of security forces in the coalition and will likely surpass the United States as the largest sometime this year.

■ Working together, U.S. and Iraqi forces have seized tons of weapons, arrested

hundreds of regime loyalists, thwarted several terror attacks, and killed or captured 40 of the 55 most-wanted regime leaders. Although Iraqi forces were not involved in the raid that netted Saddam Hussein, Iraqi sources were key pieces of the intelligence puzzle that led the 4th Infantry Division and Task Force 121 to Saddam's hiding hole.

**Worth It.** None of this comes without a price. Hundreds of U.S. troops have been killed, and more than 1,000 have been wounded. For those Americans too young to remember World War II, Korea or Vietnam, this is something new. In the shadow of Vietnam, America prosecuted its wars quickly and almost bloodlessly. They were measured in days or weeks, not years. They were quarantined within clear geographic boundaries. And they began and ended at a time of America's choosing.

That military calculus worked as the Cold War thawed, but in an age of terror – as mass murderers scramble to build weapons of mass destruction to maim U.S. cities – the American people have reluctantly concluded that their troops must risk life and limb in faraway lands to ensure that civilians aren't evaporated at home. That may sound unfeeling, but every soldier, sailor, airman and Marine I know agrees. They



Capt. Barry Seip of Task Force 1-63 Armor inoculates a villager against tuberculosis in a small village in northern Iraq.  
**U.S. Air Force**



must not fight and die in vain, but they must fight.

They are winning this fight. Surprisingly to some, especially given the bloody nature of postwar Iraq, almost two-thirds of Iraqis say liberation from Saddam's rule is worth the temporary privations of the U.S.-led occupation, according to a Gallup poll.

An American Enterprise Institute-Zogby poll conducted in four different Iraqi cities unearthed even more good news: 71 percent of Iraqis believe their lives will be better in five years, and 70 percent believe their country will be in better shape in five years. Almost three in four Iraqis want Baath Party leaders punished; fully 60 percent oppose an Islamic government in Iraq; and 57 percent have an unfavorable view of Osama bin Laden. When asked which country Iraq should model itself after, Iraqis chose the United States over Saudi Arabia, Syria, Egypt and Iran.

In fact, 59 percent of Iraqis want coalition forces to stay for more than a year. Without question, some of what the U.S. occupation forces have to do angers locals, but as one member of the Mosul City Council told *The New York Times*, "They work hard to do the right thing."

Indeed they do. War correspondent Jim Lacey reported in *National Review* that when soldiers from the 101st Airborne were ordered to guard the Mosque of Ali in Najaf, a mob of angry Iraqis, under the impression that the GIs were going to storm the holy site, blocked the Americans. But instead of retreating or opening fire, their commanding officer, Lt. Col. Chris Hughes, told them to point their guns into the ground, take a knee and grin. That's right – grin. Within minutes, American troops and Iraqi civilians were shaking hands. Lacey marveled at "an army of men who could fight with ruthless savagery all night and then respond so easily to an order to smile while under impending threat."

After fighting their way from

Kuwait to the northern third of Iraq, another brigade of the 101st Airborne was ordered to reopen trade flow between the border towns of Iraq and Syria. The unit discussed the problem with Iraqi customs officers and those with goods to trade, decided on a per-vehicle toll and reopened the commercial route. The humming trade activity has generated enough revenue to hire additional customs officials, fund other municipal projects and reconstitute local institutions of governance. One might call Iraq's northwestern borderlands the "101st Airborne Enterprise Zone."

**Different Standards.** This is nothing new for Americans. In the creativity and ambidexterity of a military that uses commerce to open up borders and revive villages, drops JDAMs on the guilty and MREs on the innocent, and lays foundations for new roads and new governments alike, we catch a glimpse of the stuff that transformed Japan and Germany after World War II.

What is new, what is a challenge for the U.S. military, is the impatience of the American people and the unblinking eye of the modern media. The U.S. military of today is simply held to a different standard than its enemies and forebears alike.

Recall that the enemy began this war by using civilian airliners as guided missiles. When the U.S. military struck back, the world watched. The world demanded that civilian casualties be avoided, that U.S. forces feed the war-weary innocents, that bombing missions be scrubbed if sand obscured the targets, that America respect the sovereignty of Afghanistan's neighbors.

Cribbing his battle plan from

al-Qaida, Saddam marched noncombatants in front of tanks, used school buses as time bombs, converted holy sites into missile sites and executed prisoners of war. And since the fall of Baghdad, his henchmen have capitalized on the protection of civilian population centers and the good will of the American military to wage a guerrilla war.

American troops have always tried to avoid civilian casualties. But can you imagine half of Doolittle's squadron dropping K-rations on Tokyo while the other half dropped incendiaries, the 8th Air Force steering clear of dams or divisions located near cathedrals, Patton reining in his tanks at this border or that for fear of violating the sovereignty of a pro-Nazi government, MacArthur ordering his troops to smile when Japanese villagers started to get agitated, Eisenhower drawing up an exit strategy in the autumn of 1945?

To be sure, the world is very different than the one my grand-

fathers fought to save in the 1940s. The American people and global media demand near-perfection from U.S. forces; the enemy knows this and thus wages war according to a far different set of standards, making the American military's achievements in Iraq to date all the more impressive.

Politicians and the press have a right and, indeed, a duty to report bad news and ask hard questions, especially in wartime. But they also have a

responsibility to tell the whole story. And the whole story is that the mission in Iraq is succeeding. Baghdad is rising. 🌱

*Alan W. Dowd is director of the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis.*

*Article design: Doug Rollison*



Young Iraqi orphan Doaa Suleiman wears a U.S. Army helmet as she tours a zoo at the presidential palace in Baghdad.

*Armed Forces Press Corbis*



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# The Rebirth of Iraq

*In the midst of violent resistance, a freed nation struggles to adopt democracy.*

BY BEN BARBER

**B**AGHDAD – A visitor's first taste of Iraq is "Sniper Alley," the road from the airport to town. The local driver calmly navigates between shredded date-palm trees, cut down to leave no hiding places. He begins to explain what is really happening here, behind the headlines.

"For me and my family, things really turned a corner this week – it feels like life has begun to return to normal," Ali says. A few weeks earlier, he'd reopened a clothing store he and his brothers own in the upscale neighborhood of Mansour and soon would reopen a second shop in the main market. It was another sign that while things were getting worse for us foreigners, things were improving for the Iraqis. Ali's children, like millions of others around the country, were excitedly preparing for the opening of the school year in early October.

Ali was one of dozens of Iraqis I met over two weeks in a half-dozen major cities around the country. All agreed on several basic points. In the Shiite strongholds of Basrah, Nasiriyah and Al Hillah in the south, as well as in Baghdad in the center and the Kurdish region around Sulimaniyah in the north, everyone I

spoke with thanked God that the Americans had driven out Saddam Hussein.

A few, especially Sunni Muslims who once dominated Iraq under Saddam's regime, wanted the American soldiers out of the cities.

"Maybe move them to some bases outside the towns so we don't have to see them patrolling every day – it hurts me to see American soldiers in my streets," said a Sunni professor of literature, who quickly added that she

Spc. William Highsmith sits with a young Iraqi boy outside a Baghdad clinic while members of the 1st Armored Division and Iraqi medical professionals teach a preventative medicine class.

*U.S. Air Force*

does not want Saddam back. "No. Not that."

Polls show most Iraqis want the Americans to stay until a stable Iraqi government is in place.

**Guilt and Fear.** Life under Saddam was so horrible that few

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Two U.S. soldiers talk with Iraqi students at the re-opening of the Baghdad University Museum of Natural History and Internet Café last December. The facility was rebuilt using \$40,000 in funds from the 1st Armored Division's Commanders Emergency Relief Program. **U.S. Air Force**

wanted to speak about it. Most try not to even think about it. Iraqis may be beginning to forget what Saddam did: the mass graves, the nerve gas at Halabja in 1988, the torture cells. It may be a psychological survival mechanism to stop thinking about it. At first, Iraqis were consumed with guilt when Saddam fell. After all, each Iraqi was a helpless witness for decades as neighbors and relatives were tortured and killed. Willing Iraqi police and Baath Party officials carried out orders of dictator Saddam that left perhaps 2 million Iraqis, Iranians and Kuwaitis – all fellow Muslims – dead in wars, prisons and killing fields.

Now, with Saddam gone, Iraqis fear ethnic or inter-religious war – Shiite against Sunni, Kurd against Moslem, Turkoman against Arabs and Kurds. The 24 million Iraqis are deeply divided by ethnicity and culture, with the Shiites largest in number, the 20-percent Sunni long in power, the Kurdish minority seeking a new role after 12 years of autonomy under the U.S.-British no-fly zone.

Iraqis also fear their own neighbors. They saw the mad

looting after the fall of Saddam's regime. The chaos that Iraqis fear was apparent on my first foray into Baghdad's huge Shiite slum, once known as Saddam City and now renamed Sadr City after a slain cleric. The area I visited was a festering pile of garbage and sewage left to rot and stink for years under Saddam – perhaps to punish the Shiites for their suspected disloyalty. Since the war, it has been cleaned up and turned into a soccer field.

One boy hung back from the others, and as I climbed into the SUV to leave, he reached under his blue shirt and pulled out a handgun. Maybe he was just showing off. I was behind bulletproof glass. But his face

*"With Saddam gone, Iraqis fear ethnic or inter-religious war – Shiite against Sunni, Kurd against Moslem, Turkoman against Arabs and Kurds."*

troubled my sleep that night in the Al Rashid Hotel.

I flew south from Baghdad to Basrah on a British C-130 and drove back to the capital over a span of four days, stopping in Nasiriyah, Amarah and other southern cities. I was back in the Al Rashid Hotel when at 6 a.m. an explosion shook the building, reminding me that as a foreigner in Iraq we are all targets of the small group that wants to take over. Three weeks after I left Iraq, rockets *again* hit the hotel, killing an American colonel and driving Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz and hundreds of foreign military personnel, aid and political officials into other quarters. But even as the foreigners increasingly were targeted – either by al-Qaida terrorists entering from Syria, Saudi Arabia and Iran, or by diehard Saddam and Baath Party loyalists – Iraqis continued to report their faith in a new democratic system they told pollsters they hoped would be similar to the American system of government.

But the small remainder wants either a return of Saddam's Baath Party or a despotic, Taliban-style Islamic state. They are ready to kill all foreigners and all Iraqis who work with the Coalition Provisional Authority seeking to restore the economy and set up a democratic Iraqi government. It remains to be seen if the Dec. 14 capture of Saddam will end the efforts by Baathists or Islamists to seize power.

**Working Together.** From May, when President Bush declared an end to major hostilities, through Nov. 22, some 293 U.S. soldiers, many other foreign soldiers and civilians, and hundreds of Iraqis died in Iraq. Major blasts hit U.N. headquarters at the Canal Hotel, killing U.N. Envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello and 20 other U.N. officials; the headquarters of the International Red Cross; and the Italian military base in Nasiriyah. Other attacks killed two members of the Iraqi Governing Council, named by the CPA as an interim government until elections are

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conducted: Aquila al Hashimi, a female Shiite diplomat, and Shiite Ayatollah Mohammad Bakr al Hakimnd. Baghdad Deputy Mayor Faris Abdul Razzaq Assam was gunned down playing dominoes in a café in late October.

Despite these attacks, most Iraqis told me that life now is much better than it was under Saddam. One morning, I left the ancient city of Nasiriyah in the south – not far from the ruins of Ur where the patriarch Abraham was born – and drove out to the marshlands. I saw water returning to the vast 8,000-square-mile region Saddam had deliberately tried to destroy to punish people for rising up against his regime after the 1991 Gulf War. The fresh water that for centuries nourished life had been diverted into the Persian Gulf by Saddam simply to destroy the 500,000 marsh Arabs.

A few miles away, I saw small fishing boats gliding over sparkling waters that had in the past week begun to return to some areas of the marsh as Iraqis opened the floodgates and knocked down the barriers Saddam had built.

In all the towns through which I passed, I saw the offices of new political parties, learning how to operate in the new freedom. City councils met to decide on projects for tap water, sewage, schools and other services. An old Shiite man in traditional *keffiyah*, or the checkered Arab head scarf, wept as he told me in the Basrah city hall that his son was executed by Saddam's forces in April as British forces stood at the gates of the city. "I could kiss the heads of the Americans," he said amid the hustle and bustle of people applying for jobs, property titles and municipal services.

In the Kurdish north, largely independent since 1991 thanks to a U.S.- and British-enforced no-fly zone, I found people even more joyful at the removal of Saddam. His tanks no longer remain massed in Kirkuk and Mosul, just an hour's drive from Erbil and Suleimanyah, the Kurdish capitals. The army camps along the road to Kirkuk or to Mosul,



Iraqis living in Baghdad show proof of citizenship during the screening phase of the hiring of the new Iraqi police force, a first step toward returning control of Iraq to its people. *U.S. Air Force*

crouching ominously in the arid plain, are now empty.

Atop the citadel in Erbil, where people have lived for perhaps 5,000 years, I looked out over a bustling and vibrant city where women can now dress as they please – in Western skirts with high heels or with a black *abaya* cloak. The bloody civil war between the two great clans of the Kurds has ended for now, and their leaders sit together on the Iraqi Governing Council appointed by CPA chief L. Paul Bremmer.

The CPA is hoping to hand over power by June to an Iraqi government that would then write a constitution and conduct elections. At a district advisory council meeting in a Baghdad neighborhood, I watched Iraqi women, men, clerics and businessmen learning how to work together in a democratic setting. They were learning to compromise, to work together, to be practical and reasonable rather than letting emotions – never far below the surface in the volatile Middle East – rule their judgments.

The U.S. occupation and administration of Iraq may be the midwife helping give birth to the new Iraq, but as any midwife will

admit, the mother does the real work. We are witnessing a historic struggle as a reborn nation emerges in the historical cradle of civilization: the Fertile Crescent, the land between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers where the world's first farmers grew wheat 7,000 years ago and the first political scientists gave us the Hammurabi Code to protect property and define the rights of citizens 3,700 years ago. It is the place where the patriarch Abraham began the search for a more godly way of life now pursued by Jews, Christians and Muslims.

For some, including scores of U.S. soldiers and many innocent Iraqis, the struggle to help Iraq to be reborn as a modern, free democratic state will cost them their lives. And the outcome is still not clear. 🌿

*Ben Barber is a senior writer and editor for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is a former State Department bureau chief for The Washington Times. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of USAID.*

*Article design: Doug Rollison*

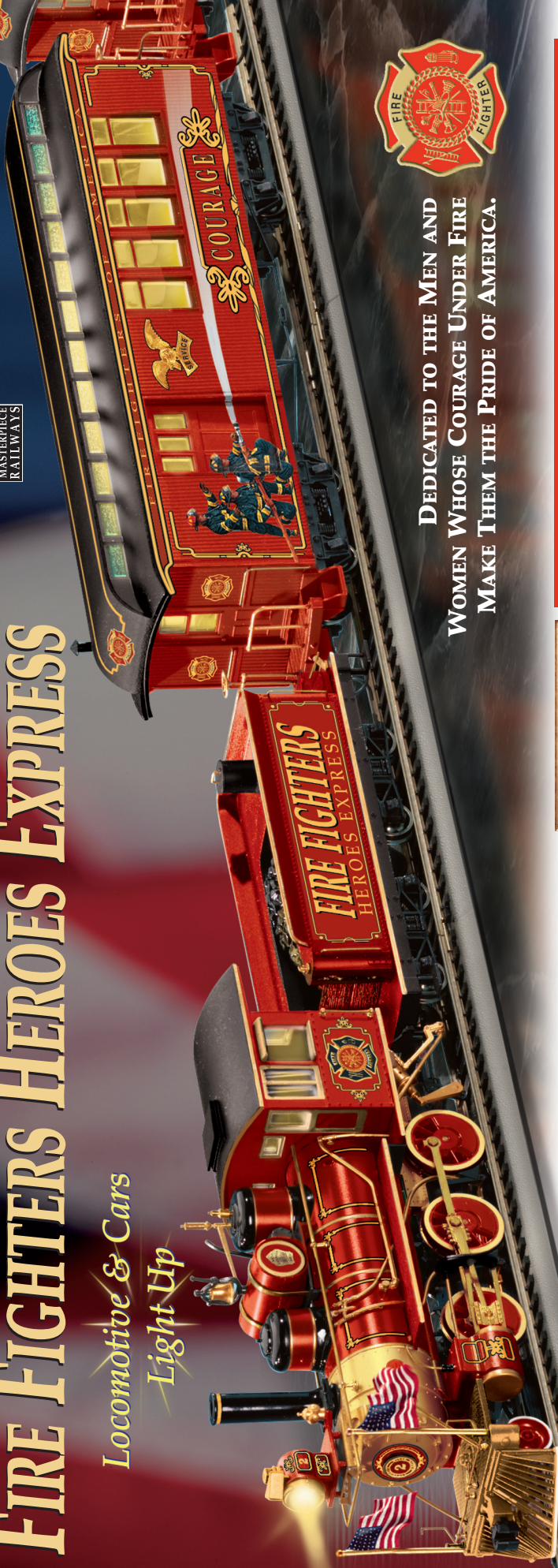


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# A celebration of

*The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival showcases the amazing healing power of self-expression.*

**BY ELISSA KAUPISCH**

In 1983, Air Force Sgt. James Sterrett-Bryant of Van Nuys, Calif., may have been only a few months away from realizing his dream of becoming an opera star. Then a car crash left him a quadriplegic.

Before the crash, Sterrett-Bryant was auditioning for a starring role in Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess" with the New York City's Metropolitan Opera. After the crash, doctors told him he'd be bedridden and dependent the rest of his life. To make matters worse, he suffered partial paralysis on one side of his larynx. "From the time I was a kid, all I ever wanted to do was sing," he said. "After the accident, I thought I'd never sing again."

Physical therapy enabled Sterrett-Bryant, now 61, to regain some mobility in his arms and legs. Music therapy, a program offered at many VA medical facilities, helped him retrain his singing voice.

Today, Sterrett-Bryant is frequently the featured soloist at school convocations, where he inspires underprivileged, inner-city youth by singing classics most of them have never heard. His is a story of triumph and renewal, one of many such experiences shared among veterans each year during the weeklong National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The festival – sponsored by The American Legion Auxiliary, the Department of Veterans Affairs and Help Hospitalized Veterans – is the culmination of talent competitions among veterans treated in VA's national health-care system. It includes work-

shops, rehearsals, fellowship, and an art and stage show as a grand finale.

More than 2,900 veterans from 103 VA medical facilities in 2003 entered competitions in art, music, drama and dance. More than 120 first-place finalists earned invitations to the festival in Oklahoma City last October.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival originated in the early 1980s as two separate competitions: VET ARTS, for visual arts, and the National Music Competition for Veterans. The two merged in 1989 to become the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

More than a talent competition, the festival spotlights the healing powers of art, music, drama and dance – a type of therapy VA has been putting to good use for veterans across the country.

Elizabeth Mackey, the festival's director, said, "Physical and emotional wounds arising from military experience can't always be expressed in words. Through the arts, the deepest of emotions can be safely expressed."

American Legion Auxiliary National President Katherine Morris agreed. "The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival promotes healing and helps veterans live rich, fulfilling lives after trauma or disease," she said.

Barbara Chaney of the Temple-Texas, served in the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1980. She suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder and other health



World War II veteran Joseph "Leo" Bailey of Concord, Calif., gold-medal winner in the instrumental solo-country/folk/bluegrass category, performs "Under the Double Eagle" on his electric guitar. *David Faytinger*

problems. "Music therapy helps me focus on something positive," she said.

For Millicent Ceaser of El Paso, Texas, a Desert Storm veteran and soloist, the festival is a time of fellowship and sharing. "There

## For more info

Contact Liz Mackey, director of the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival:

**Call:** (320) 255-6351

**E-mail:** [elizabeth.mackey@med.va.gov](mailto:elizabeth.mackey@med.va.gov)

**Online:** [www.appc1.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2003/default.cfm](http://www.appc1.va.gov/vetevent/caf/2003/default.cfm)

# hope<sup>and</sup>renewal

were times I couldn't talk at all about my time in the service. Because the veterans I've met here are so proud to tell their stories, I can finally talk about it. Now I know I can move on with my life and live with my memories."

For Michael Cruse of Fayetteville, Ark., who won first place with his hand-painted china vase "Where Eagles Fly," art therapy has been a moving experience. Literally.

Cruse, who was traumatized during his stint in the Navy when his ship nearly capsized and a helicopter exploded over his head, suffers from PTSD. For 15 years, he lived in the mountains and avoided contact with all but a few people. Art therapy brought him out and changed him forever. "China painting is a magical thing," he said. "It helps me put all the negative things in my life on the back burner. I'm finally starting to enjoy life. Now I live in town and have a shop. It's great trying to become a human being again."

Music therapy helped Donny Ray Crume of Killeen, Texas –

four-time festival attendee and member of the Temptations – cope with disturbing memories that date back to 1971 when he joined the Navy, shortly after his half-brother was drafted into the Army. Crume and his half-brother were deployed to Vietnam. Crume, only 18 at the time, was assigned to bag and take inventory of soldiers' corpses in a military morgue in Saigon.

During the first two months on the job, he bagged two classmates he knew from high school. A month later, he was assigned to identify and bag a severely disfigured body; it was his half-brother. The Army immediately transferred him.

Crume says his parents blamed him for his half-brother's death and subsequently disowned him.

"My family thought I volunteered for the Navy so I could lie around on a ship while my brother fought in one of Vietnam's hot spots. They thought I somehow cheated the system, and they never forgave me."

A Navy career man, Crume was unable to forgive himself and became severely depressed. After brief hospitaliza-



"Eagles in the Valley," sculpted by Vietnam War veteran Larry House of Louisville, Ky., earned a gold medal in the special recognition category. **David Faytinger**

tions and three suicide attempts, Crume says he was sent back to service without counseling. When he retired from the Navy in 1993, he suffered a nervous breakdown and was diagnosed with PTSD. At 50, he remains haunted by wartime memories. When he lived near Fort Hood, loud noises – cars backfiring, machine guns and cannons firing –

rattled his nerves. "Helicopters flying overhead brought back memories of 'Nam,'" he said.

Three years ago, he met a fellow American Indian, Albert Gray Eagle, at the Creative Arts Festival. Gray Eagle taught Crume how to play a few notes on a cedar flute and encouraged him to explore his Chiricahua Apache roots. Crume followed the advice. Today, he serves as executive secretary of the Tribal American Network, a nonprofit organization that demonstrates dances, music and crafts at pow-wows and public schools. Crume, an accomplished musician, regularly plays his flutes – a Native Apache River Reed flute and a cedar flute – at these events. He also teaches others to play.

"Playing the flute is my way of getting serenity," he said. "The VA's music therapy program and the Creative Arts Festival have saved my life." 🕊

*Elissa Kaupisch is an assistant editor at The American Legion Magazine.*



Ronald Ross, from Grand Junction, Colo., American Legion Post 2700, earned a gold medal for his Vietnam Wall photo compilation. Ross, a past district and past department commander, started his photography while serving during the Vietnam War. **David Faytinger**



interview





# DOLLY *Star-Spangled*

*Country superstar pays tribute to God and America.*

With a flair for telling stories in songs and a voice to match, Dolly Parton always intended to become a household name. On her graduation day in 1964, Parton's high-school class laughed in her face when she declared, "I'm going to Nashville to become a star." That she did, jumping from top billing on the popular "Porter Wagoner Show" to the top of music charts to Hollywood's silver screen, proving that a penniless "hillbilly" from the mountains of Tennessee has as much of a shot at success as any other person born in America.

Parton, who once claimed she grew up so poor that "even the ants who stole our food felt sorry for us," now has a personal fortune estimated at \$300 million. She has written more than 3,000 songs and released nearly 70 albums. She owns a music publishing firm, two production companies and a chain of equestrian-themed "Dixie Stampede" dinner theaters, as well as a sizable portion of a Tennessee theme park and water park that bear her name.

Ask how she did it all and Parton won't be shy about the musical gifts that rocketed her to fame. In the same breath, though, she'll tell you how grateful she is to God and America for a career most celebrities would envy. Parton offers thanks on her latest record, a collection of religious and patriotic songs released last Veterans Day. *The American Legion Magazine* recently spoke with Parton about the inspiration behind "For God and Country."

**The American Legion Magazine:**

*You grew up poor in the mountains of East Tennessee, then went to Nashville and – after a lot of hard work – hit the big time. In a way, you have a rags-to-riches story. Would you say you've lived the American dream?*

**Dolly Parton:** I'm still living it. I feel so blessed just to live in America. Even with all our weak-

nesses and faults, we're still the greatest country in the world. I'm a good example of what kind of opportunities America has to offer. I can't imagine what my life would have been had I lived somewhere else.

**TALM:** *You're not just a singer and songwriter, but a business-woman. It's said that your Smoky*

*Mountain theme park, Dollywood, has brought thousands of jobs to what was a poor part of Tennessee.*

**DP:** It's part of the American dream to appreciate the position you're in by giving back. I feel fortunate to have been able to do that through the theme park. I love knowing I'm able to help other people. I'm big on the values I was taught growing up: home, God, faith, sharing, caring, being a good neighbor, loving everybody like they're your own family.

As other celebrities use their star power to criticize the administration and the war in Iraq, Dolly Parton wants to encourage and unite Americans with her patriotic album "For God and Country." **Annie Leibovitz**



**TALM:** *You have a few connections to the military. Your husband, Carl Dean, served in the National Guard. Your best friend, Judy Ogle, served in the Air Force. Your uncle, Bill Owens, also served.*

**DP:** So did Don Warden, who works with me. Many of my relatives served too. I'm surrounded by all these veterans. I meet veterans all the time. I've written many songs about soldiers, what they go through and what they give up to protect us. They know they've got to do it; they want to do it. They're my heroes, and I want to thank every one of them. We could never say enough about them. We could never praise and honor them enough.

**TALM:** *It's been said that a couple of your songs are based on a veteran who lived not too far from your childhood home. In your autobiography, "Dolly," you say he taught you some banjo.*

**DP:** I based the story of "Joshua" on him, and "Apple Jack." His name was Perry Lindsey. We called him "Sawdust." He was a loner. He was a World War II veteran, and he used to tell me all about the war and the fighting. He was a special person. It's those people from your childhood who take you outside of yourself and where you live. He influenced my music and my life in general.

**TALM:** *On "For God and Country," you show a new side of Dolly Parton by poking fun at America's enemies, challenging Osama bin Laden to join his suicide bombers and calling Saddam's men "a deck of all jokers." Have you considered doing comedy?*

**DP:** Well, I think it's important to have a sense of humor all the time, not just during war. Humor, laughter – they're very healing.

**TALM:** *What impact did Sept. 11 have on your songwriting?*

**DP:** "Color Me America" is a song I wrote the day after the tragedy.

*"I do not have a doubt that this was the right thing to do, at least for me. This album isn't anti-anything. This is pro-God and pro-America."*

I was frightened. Something like that shatters your confidence and faith. It makes you feel vulnerable. As a songwriter and singer, I'm so glad to have an outlet to express those feelings for myself and others.

**TALM:** *What role do you think entertainers have during wartime?*

**DP:** Well, I think it's our place as entertainers just to entertain. You can only imagine how homesick the soldiers must be. I've never done any USO tours because I'm scared to death of airplanes, but I'd love to do what Bob Hope did. He brought so much to the spirits of American troops. We'll be traveling to bases to do shows and maybe go overseas. It's our place to do what we can.

**TALM:** *Considering the war in Iraq is unpopular with many celebrities, did you think it might be risky to release a patriotic album at this time?*

**DP:** I do not have a doubt that this was the right thing to do, at least for me. This album isn't anti-anything. This is pro-God and pro-America. As for some celebrities, they probably wouldn't be that into this anyhow. We all have freedom of choice, freedom of speech. Some abuse 'em, some don't. I'm just proud to be part of the whole thing.

**TALM:** *What reaction has the finished product received from your family and friends?*

**DP:** They love it. Everybody said, "Well, it's about damn time." I'm not political, but I am patriotic.

**TALM:** *Of the album's 18 songs, do you have a favorite or two?*

**DP:** "Welcome Home" is the first single off the record, and it's my favorite one for personal reasons.

It has a way of tying God and the patriotic together. My other favorite is "Brave Little Soldier." I wrote "Brave Little Soldier" for my niece who had leukemia. I love the whole album, though.

**TALM:** *"Welcome Home" is one of a handful of spiritual songs on the album. You sing of a father welcoming his son home from war, and in the next verse you sing of God welcoming Christ home from the cross. More risky territory?*

**DP:** I have no fear of glorifying God. My faith is true. It's been what has led and guided me. I'm not afraid to speak about it. They crucified Jesus. Why shouldn't they crucify me? Most people believe in God. I happen to be a Christian myself. With God, I can do all things. Who do I have to be afraid of?

**TALM:** *One of your earliest hits, "The Seeker," is about finding shelter in the Lord. You've been writing songs about God as long as you've been writing songs.*

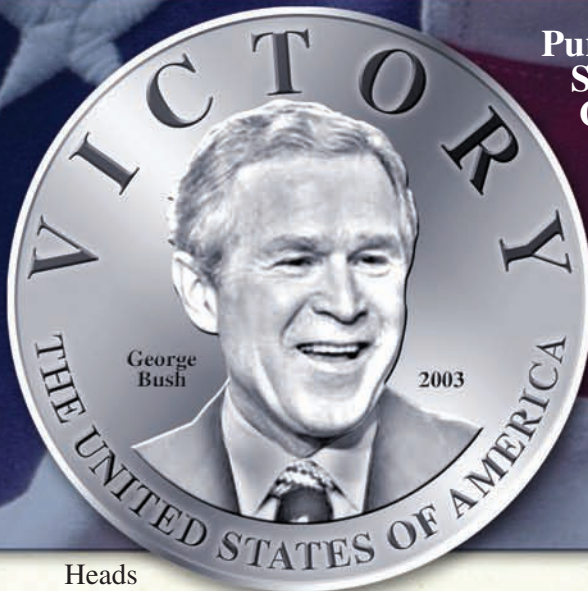
**DP:** People know my faith and my background. I'm not trying to cram my religion down anyone's throat. I think people accept that that's who I am. I'm not going to back up now.

**TALM:** *"For God and Country" comes just a year after the release of your most recent bluegrass album, "Halos & Horns." You pulled it together fast.*

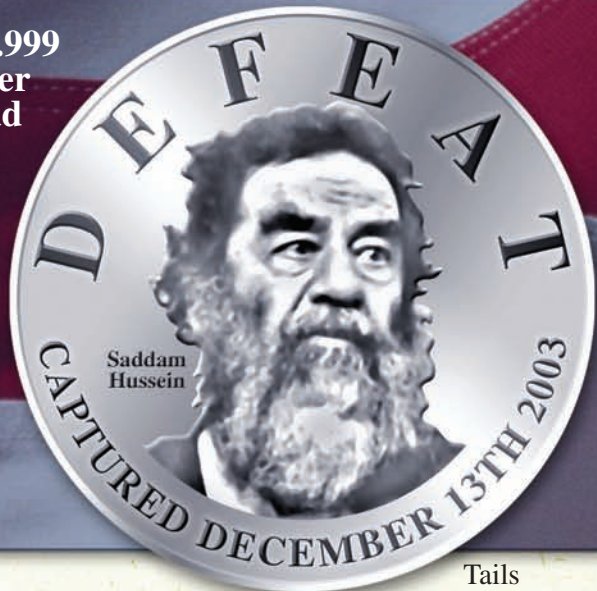
**DP:** I did it in three months. I'd always hoped to do a patriotic recording. With all the stuff going on in the world right now, it seemed to be the right time. I'm as proud of it as I am of anything I've ever done. We're planning a TV special based on the album, and I'm hoping to do an all-American tour in auditoriums and churches. I think I'll be doing this for the next 18 months to two years. I hope it's an inspiration to people. ☼

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*

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## Nexus of evil

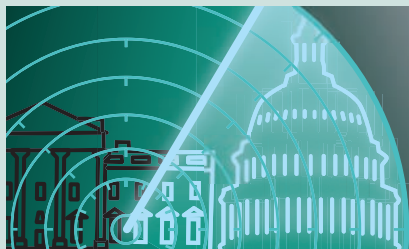
Challenging the widely held notion that there was no link between Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations, Deroy Murdock has authored a detailed, blow-by-blow account of the Hussein-terror nexus. Not only does Murdock's article serve as a ready indictment of Hussein's regime, it should silence those who have been dismissing the possibility that secular, Baathist Iraq could have cooperated with fundamentalist Islamic terrorists. "Claims about a lack of ties between Hussein and terrorists," Murdock writes, "are untrue."

Writing in the Hudson Institute's *American Outlook* magazine last fall, Murdock documented dozens of direct connections and tangential links between Hussein and an all-star team of international terrorists:

- Beginning in March 2002, Hussein made cash payments to the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. At least 223 murders can be traced back to Hussein's terror scholarships; that death toll includes 12 Americans.

- Prior to the fall of his regime, Hussein provided safe haven to the Palestinian Liberation Front, Arab Liberation Front, Mujahedin-e-Khalq and the Abu Nidal Organization (ANO). The ANO supplied Libyan terrorists with bomb-making materials that brought down Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988, killing 189 Americans.

- Ramzi Yousef, the al-Qaida-backed master-



mind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, came to the United States on an Iraqi passport. Hussein provided a safe house to Yousef's co-conspirator Abdul Rahman Yasin, who constructed the bomb used during the attack.

- Hussein ran a terrorist training camp 15 miles south of Baghdad, where agents used a full-sized passenger jet to practice hijackings.

- Phone records reveal that Iraqi diplomats in Manila were in close contact with an al-Qaida offshoot before and after it carried out a bombing that killed a U.S. soldier.

- In late 2002, Hussein's son bragged about cooperation between Iraq's ambassador to Pakistan and al-Qaida. As far back as 1994, Hussein's ambassador to Turkey was meeting with al-Qaida operatives.

- Perhaps most damning of all, in early 2000, an Iraqi emissary escorted two of the Sept. 11 hijackers to a meeting with some of al-Qaida's top planners in Malaysia.

The fact that Saddam was godless and bin Laden a religious fanatic is irrelevant. Like Hitler and Tojo, Churchill and Stalin, they worked together to fight a common enemy. As Murdock concludes, "Plenty of evidence clearly exists in the public record ... to confirm that Saddam Hussein's ouster, Iraq's liberation and its current rehabilitation were, and are, vital phases of the continuing war on terrorism."

—A.W.D.

## Asian allies

Iraq's rehabilitation is getting a strong assist from Japan. Tokyo dispatched about 1,000 troops to southeastern Iraq after Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the nation in December.

The deployment will be backed up by armored vehicles, cargo planes and six warships. The operation marks the first significant deployment of Japanese troops overseas since World War II, and it represents a serious political gamble for Koizumi: Japan has not lost a soldier in combat since 1945.

In April, South Korea will send 3,000 troops to northern Iraq, including special-operations forces who are known to have close working relationships with the U.S. military.



Members of Japan's Air Self-Defense Force stand at attention in front of their C-130 transport aircraft during a send-off ceremony in December. The troops were dispatched to help rebuild Iraq in Japan's biggest overseas mission since World War II. **AP**

In yet another sign that Japan is ready to be a strong U.S. partner in promoting security, Koizumi has announced his intention to go ahead with the construction of a missile-defense system.

Tokyo and Washington have been quietly co-developing

missile defenses since the late 1990s, when North Korea began its push to deploy long-range missilery. Using land-based missiles such as the modified Patriot PAC2 and PAC3, as well as sea-based missiles aboard *Aegis* cruisers, the anti-missile system will form a layered defense of Japanese cities and key U.S. bases. The system could be operational by 2007.

Australia has also agreed to join the United States in developing an antiballistic-missile system. The December decision to join the ABM team is important for America's own defense, since a U.S. system will depend on satellite-tracking stations inside Australia.

—Alan W. Dowd



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# We can rebuild you

*Exciting advances in prosthetics.*

**BY DR. MINDY AISEN**

You may remember the 1970s television show “The Six Million Dollar Man,” about a test pilot who suffered severe injuries in a crash and was “rebuilt” with atomic-powered parts. This made him a superman who could lift cars and leap tall buildings in a single bound.

Today, scientists and clinicians in prosthetics are beginning to use space-age technology to help patients who have lost limbs due to traumatic injury, diabetes or other diseases. The goal, however, is to simply give patients the chance to once again do things that most of us take for granted: walking, running, and eating with a knife and fork.

Using sophisticated microcomputers and advanced materials such as carbon fiber and titanium, engineers strive to design prosthetic limbs that look, feel and work like natural human limbs. One survivor of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center was able to quickly walk down 70 flights of stairs to safety, thanks to his high-tech artificial leg.

Gee-whiz componentry isn't everything. Prosthetics is not just a science, but an art and craft. Practitioners who fit amputees with artificial limbs must be highly skilled and responsive to the individual needs of their patients. The most advanced, sophisticated artificial limb is not necessarily the best choice for every patient. Cost is important, too. If an artificial leg is too expensive for a patient or health-care system to afford, it is not a solution.

**VA Leads Research.** Still, it is fascinating to see how new technology is making a dramatic difference in quality of life for



Corbis

amputees. VA has played a pivotal role in these advances since the days following World War II.

Early VA studies of limb motions under different conditions provided better understanding of the properties of the stump, or residual limb. This helped surgeons refine their amputation techniques in order to better preserve the functions of muscles and tendons. The result was improved performance of prosthetic limbs.

VA-developed methods for fitting and fabricating artificial limbs have become the standard throughout the world. In the 1980s, VA researcher Dr. Ernest M. Burgess, aided by aerospace engineers, introduced the “Seattle Foot,” a spring-loaded, lightweight prosthetic foot that enabled below-knee amputees to once again run and jump.

**Help for Amputees.** It is sad that war continues to be a major cause of limb loss. Due to advances in body armor and battlefield first aid, many combat veterans who

would otherwise have been killed in action are surviving, albeit with severe injury to their extremities.

In partnership with Walter Reed Army Medical Center, VA is planning the first-ever randomized clinical trial of a much-publicized computerized prosthetic leg. VA also is spearheading studies of a promising new surgical technique, developed in Sweden, that allows for prosthetic components to be anchored directly into the bone of the residual limb.

**Nanotechnology.** Exciting developments are in the research stage. Engineers are working to create systems that actually link the human brain to the artificial limb. The technology will rely on microelectro-mechanical systems with machine gears no larger than a grain of pollen. It will likely use bionic neurons – tiny implantable devices that can transmit electrical signals to muscles. VA is working with the Alfred E. Mann Foundation, a nonprofit California firm, to develop this technology. Nanotechnology, robotics and tissue engineering also will play roles in the emergence of a new generation of prosthetic limbs that look and function remarkably like natural limbs.

Research by VA scientists and others is expanding the boundaries of the imagination. Their advances will benefit not only military personnel and veterans, but all amputees in America and around the world.

*Mindy Aisen, M.D., is deputy chief research and development officer and acting director of rehabilitation research and development in the Veterans Health Administration.*

*Living Well is designed to provide general information. It is not intended to be, nor is it, medical advice. Readers should consult their personal physicians when they have health problems.*

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# Strength training essential exercise

The benefits of a well-balanced exercise program cannot be understated. But many Americans who exercise are skipping a crucial component of a successful regi-



Corbis

men: strength and power training.

A new report from Harvard Medical School, "Strength and Power Training: A Guide for All Ages," addresses the importance of this activity in promoting and maintaining strong muscles.

Muscle tissue, bone density and strength dwindle over time. This decline can lead to physical injuries and debilitating fractures, which when added to the aging process can compromise an independent and active life. Strength training helps to slow and possibly reverse muscle decline. Strong muscles don't offer just muscle-related benefits. They can lighten the heart's workload, aid in promoting good cholesterol and help prevent diabetes by improving blood-sugar control.

It's never too late for people of all ages to

incorporate strength and power training into an exercise program. For beginners, here are tips to help get started:

- It's best to do strength training two to three times a week when you begin.

- Always allow at least 48 hours for muscles to recover between strength-training workouts.

- A complete strength-training workout typically includes two or three sets of 8 to 12 repetitions per set of approximately 8 to 12 exercises that, combined, work the major muscle groups.

- Once you understand exactly how to do each exercise, choose weights that allow you to do only 8 to 12 repetitions.

- Before attempting a specific exercise, it's essential to learn the proper form. Poor form can cause injuries and slow gains.

- Any time you exercise you should begin by warming up for 5 to 10 minutes and end by cooling down for another 5 to 10 minutes.

Source: Harvard Health Publications

## MEF2A gene linked to heart disease

Scientists at the Cleveland Clinic have identified the first gene confirmed as a cause of coronary heart disease.

The gene, MEF2A, was discovered by studying the genetic makeup of 21 members of an Iowa family plagued for generations by incidents of coronary artery disease and heart attack.

"Finding the gene opens a new avenue through which scientists can track the pathway that leads to coronary heart disease and heart attack," Dr. Qing Wang said. "Genes in that pathway then can be used as targets to design new drugs intended to prevent or treat heart disease. Finding the gene also will make it easier to definitively diagnose patients with highly significant family histories of heart disease."

What was discovered is a deletion mutation, said Dr. Eric J. Topol, chairman of the clinic's department of cardiovascular medicine. This deletion affects coronary artery walls, making them less able to protect themselves from plaque buildup and heart disease.

"People with this exact MEF2A mutation have essentially a 100-percent chance of having a heart attack or developing coronary artery disease," Topol said. "For them, it's not a matter of *if*, but *when*. For that reason, we think this specific mutation will prove to be rare. Most genes that will be discovered to induce heart attack will be more common and not carry as high a risk."

No matter what the future of heart disease research holds, Topol

said, one thing is clear: lifestyle choices are vitally important in the fight against heart disease. For people with this deletion mutation, the battle is to identify and control lifestyle factors – weight, blood pressure, diet – to delay the onset of heart disease as long as possible. People without genetic predisposition must take steps that will prevent heart disease.

"Despite all medical advances to date, heart disease remains the No. 1 killer in the developed world," Topol said. "Someone suffers a coronary event every 29 seconds, and someone dies every minute. Unlocking the genetic secrets of this disease is a first step in a new research avenue to help save countless lives."

Source: Cleveland Clinic Foundation

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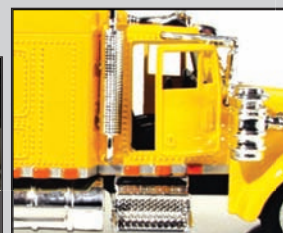
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Courtesy www.wwiimemorial.com

## Day of honoring World War II veterans draws near

Every American Legion post has the opportunity to coordinate a once-in-a-lifetime event. In May, when the long-awaited World War II monument is dedicated on the National Mall in Washington, hundreds of thousands of people will attend. Yet, for many, the trip is not possible. Local events coinciding with the dedication can bring the occasion home, no matter the location.

All posts were sent a World War II National Dedication Day event-planning guide in September. In December, posts were asked to return response cards providing their points of contact for local events and brief descriptions of their plans.

The World War II Memorial Dedication is a significant historical event. Unlike many such events, local angles for news media can be found almost everywhere. Local media will naturally want to talk with World War II veterans. Community events will make that possible and provide recognition to those who cannot travel to Washington.

"We really need to know what local posts are planning so The American Legion can help major news-media outlets find hometown gatherings of interest," said Robert L. Morrill, chairman of the Legion's National Public Relations Commission. "Those cards help us provide the latest information and better

assess the scope of activities."

Posts are urged to return their cards if they have not yet done so, Morrill said.

"If you are not involved in honoring World War II veterans, you are missing the opportunity to fulfill the ideals set forth in the preamble to The American Legion Constitution."

Postcards are postage-paid.

### Alternate lodging for memorial dedication

The following hotels offering discounts to Legionnaires attending the National World War II Memorial Dedication no longer have vacancies. However, last-minute cancellations may create openings. To inquire about alternate housing arrangements, contact Dick Holmes or Jennifer Zellers, The American Legion National Convention Division, at (317) 630-1292 or (317) 630-1313, or e-mail [rholmes@legion.org](mailto:rholmes@legion.org) or [jzellers@legion.org](mailto:jzellers@legion.org).

**Courtyard by Marriott, Embassy Row:** 1600 Rhode Island Ave. N.W. Washington, DC 20036, (800) 321-2211 or (202) 293-8000.

**Marriott Key Bridge:** 1401 Lee Highway, Arlington, VA 22209, (800) 228-9290 or (703) 524-6400.

**Marriott Crystal City:** 1999 Jefferson Davis Highway, Arlington, VA 22202, (800) 228-9290 or (703) 413-5500.

## Airlines offer Legion discounts

Four major airlines are offering travel discounts to members of The American Legion family who plan to attend the National World War II Memorial Dedication ceremony in Washington during Memorial Day weekend. Legionnaires are requested to make reservations directly through the airlines, not through The American Legion.

When making airline reservations, use the following telephone numbers and reference codes:

**Northwest Airlines**  
(800) 328-1111. Refer to World File No. NM3SZ.

**American Airlines**  
(800) 433-1790. Refer to Index No. 16882.

**US Airways**  
(877) 874-7687. Refer to Gold File No. 1661-2946.

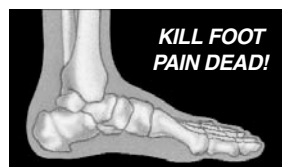
**United Airlines**  
(800) 521-4041. Refer to Tour Code No. 500ZV.

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**Harvey Rothschild,**  
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# Agent Orange benefits available

During the Vietnam War, U.S. forces used herbicides to destroy jungle foliage in order to expose enemy troops. These herbicides, the most infamous of which is Agent Orange, have harmed thousands of veterans exposed to them. Compensation is available for veterans and, in some cases, their dependents suffering from illnesses or disabilities proven to be related to exposure. The American Legion remains vigilant in its efforts to ensure all veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled.

Proof of exposure to Agent

Orange is not necessary for claim purposes. However, evidence of in-country service in Vietnam during the war and supporting medical documentation is required. A previous 30-year limitation on presumptive service

connection for respiratory cancers caused by herbicide exposure was eliminated in late 2001. Veterans previously denied benefits may reapply.

Exposure to Agent Orange is conceded if a

veteran served in-country. Some conditions require that a veteran prove that his or her symptoms started within a specific time frame after departure from

## For more info

Contact The American Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division:

**Call:** (202) 861-2700

**E-mail:** var@legion.org

**Online:** www.legion.org

(Click on "Veterans," then "Vietnam Veterans Information.")

## VA-recognized Agent Orange conditions

Chloracne

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

Multiple myeloma

Respiratory cancers of lung, trachea and bronchus

Prostate cancer

Soft-tissue sarcoma

Hodgkin's disease

Porphyria cutanea tarda

Peripheral neuropathy (acute or subacute)

Type-2 diabetes

Spina bifida in children of veterans

Chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL)

Vietnam. Veterans must submit the following information:

■ Proof of service in Vietnam during war time (Jan. 9, 1962, to May 7, 1975), and

■ Medical documentation of the condition or conditions officially recognized by VA. Medical conditions currently recognized by VA as related to Agent Orange exposure are listed in the box above.

The VA claims process can be extremely complicated. It is recommended that veterans contact a professional American Legion service officer for assistance in filing VA disability claims. The service is free and does not require Legion membership.

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**Honolulu** Aug. 19-25, 2005

**Salt Lake City** Aug. 18-24, 2006

**Reno, Nev.** Aug. 24-30, 2007

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Call Jennifer Zellers or Dick Holmes:  
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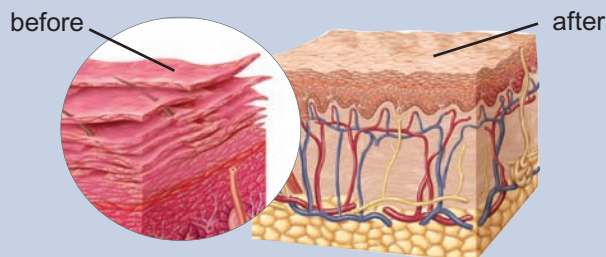
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Seniors on fixed incomes are often affected by rising prescription costs and are forced to go without seriously needed medicine.

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The American Legion Discount Prescription Program offers a number of advantages over other discount plans, including:

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- Average savings of 20 percent to 90 percent.
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- If the pharmacy has a sale on a particular drug that is less than the negotiated program discount, members receive the lower price.

## Legionnaires in Action

**Gainesville, Ga., Post 7** recently honored three longtime members: Tom Hodge, Bob Adams and Roy Turner. Each man has given more than 50 years of leadership to his local post. Each was commander of Post 7 more than 50 years ago and has continued to be active since the end of World War II.

**Goose Creek, S.C., Post 166** displays a collection of 490 different official American Legion automobile license plates on the walls of their post home. The license plates represent all 50 states, plus some from Germany, France, China and other international posts. Pennsylvania leads the group with 60 plates. The post has collected Legion plates for 18 years.

Legionnaire Robert Snitgen of **Kellogg, Minn., Post 546** volunteers as an American bald-eagle handler at the National Eagle Center in Wabasha, Minn. The center's mission is to foster environmental stewardship through conservation, research and education; to appreciate the bald eagle as a symbol of our cultural heritage; and to celebrate the eagle as a symbol of the success of federal and state endangered-species recovery efforts. The center serves as a permanent home for wounded eagles that cannot be returned to the wild. Snitgen, along with other volunteers and center employees, takes three bald eagles – Harriet, Angel and Columbia – to schools and communities across the country to educate the public about the importance of protecting America's national symbol. The eagles have been introduced at ceremonies honoring servicemembers returning from the war in Iraq, and servicemembers have enjoyed being photographed with the birds. The eagles also have lifted the spirits of patients at St. Paul's VA hospital.



For more information, call toll-free (877) 332-4537 or visit [Nationaleaglecenter.com](http://Nationaleaglecenter.com). Tax-deductible donations may be mailed to National Eagle Center, P.O. Box 242, Wabasha, MN 55981-0242.

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## Correction

In the February "Legion News" article "Airlines Offer Legionnaires Travel Discounts," the American Airlines travel discount should read "Refer to Index No. 16882."

# Choose Life Grow Young with HGH

From the landmark book *Grow Young with HGH* comes the most powerful, over-the-counter health supplement in the history of man. Human growth hormone was first discovered in 1920 and has long been thought by the medical community to be necessary only to stimulate the body to full adult size and therefore unnecessary past the age of 20. Recent studies, however, have overturned this notion completely, discovering instead that the natural decline of Human Growth Hormone (HGH), from ages 21 to 61 (the average age at which there is only a trace left in the body) and is the reason why the body ages and fails to regenerate itself to its 25 year-old biological age.

Like a picked flower cut from the source, we gradually wilt physically and mentally and become vulnerable to a host of degenerative diseases, that we simply weren't susceptible to in our early adult years.

Modern medical science now regards aging as a disease that is treatable and preventable and that "aging", the disease, is actually a compilation of various diseases and pathologies, from everything, like a rise in blood glucose and pressure to diabetes, skin wrinkling and so on. All of these aging symptoms can be stopped and rolled back by maintaining Growth Hormone levels in the blood at the same levels HGH existed in the blood when we were 25 years old. There is a receptorsite in almost every cell in the human

body for HGH, so its regenerative and healing effects are very comprehensive.

Growth Hormone first synthesized in 1985 under the Reagan Orphan drug act, to treat dwarfism, was quickly recognized to stop aging in its tracks and reverse it to a remarkable degree. Since then, only the lucky and the rich have had access to it at the cost of \$20,000 US per year.

Many in hollywood's glamour sets, who never seem to age like you or I, have a special secret to tell, and even space pioneer and US Senator John Glen stays vital with HGH.

The next big breakthrough was to come in 1997 when the American Anti-aging Society, a group of doctors and scientists, developed an all-natural source product which would cause your own natural HGH to be released again and do all the remarkable things it did for you in your 20's. Now available to every adult for the price of a coffee and donut a day.

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The president of BIE Health Products, the American distributor, stated in a recent interview, "I've been waiting for these products since the 70's. We knew they would come, if only we could stay healthy and live long enough to see them! If you want to stay on top of your game, physically and mentally as you age, this product is a boon, especially for the highly skilled professionals who have made large investments in their education, and experience. Also with the failure of Congress to honor our seniors with pharmaceutical coverage policy, it's more important than ever to take pro-active steps to safeguard your health. Continued use of GHR will make a radical difference in your health, HGH is particularly helpful to the elderly who, given a choice, would rather stay independent in their own home, strong healthy and alert enough to manage their own affairs, exercise and stay involved in their communities. Frank, age 85 walks two miles a day, plays golf, belongs to a dance club for seniors, has a girl friend again and doesn't need Viagra, passed his drivers test and is hardly ever home when we call - GHR delivers.

HGH is known to reverse Hemorrhoids, Multiple Sclerosis, Ankylosing Spondylitis, Macular Degeneration, Cataracts, Colitis, Fibromyalgia, Angina, Chronic Fatigue, Diabetes, Hepatitis C, Rheumatoid Arthritis, High Blood Pressure, Sciatica, helps Kidney Dialysis and heart and stroke recovery.

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# Travel discounts available to Legion meetings

The American Legion has arranged travel discounts with American Airlines, Northwest Airlines, United Airlines and US Airways for transportation to official American Legion meetings during 2004. By making arrangements through the Legion's travel agent, members will save 5 percent to 10 percent, depending on how far in advance tickets are purchased. A reduced service fee will be charged. Tickets should be purchased at least 30 days prior to travel.

Meetings that qualify for airline discounts are shown in the chart at right.

## For reservations

Contact Marti Wooden, Finance Division, National Headquarters:

**Call:** (317) 630-1232

8 a.m. to 4 p.m. (EST) Monday to Friday

**E-mail:** mwooden@legion.org

|                 |                                              |                                                                                                                                  |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| March 4-7       | <b>DSO Workshop</b>                          | Washington (DCA, BWI & IAD)                                                                                                      |
| March 6-10      | <b>D.C. Conference</b>                       | Washington (DCA, BWI & IAD)                                                                                                      |
| March 19-21     | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Macon, Ga., and Atlanta                                                                                                          |
| April 2-4       | <b>Oratorical Contest</b>                    | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |
| April 16-18     | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Hartford, Conn., and Omaha, Neb.                                                                                                 |
| April 23-25     | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Springfield, Ill., and Phoenix                                                                                                   |
| May 1-6         | <b>Spring Meetings</b>                       | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |
| May 14-16       | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Harrisburg, Pa.                                                                                                                  |
| July 23-31      | <b>Boys Nation</b>                           | Washington                                                                                                                       |
| July 23-31      | <b>DSO School and Membership Workshop</b>    | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |
| Aug. 10-15      | <b>Junior Shooting Sports</b>                | Colorado Springs, Colo.                                                                                                          |
| Aug. 12-16      | <b>Baseball Regionals</b>                    | Hartford, Conn.; Philadelphia; Nashville, Tenn.; Baton Rouge, La., or New Orleans; Cincinnati; Omaha, Neb.; Denver; Eugene, Ore. |
| Aug. 20-24      | <b>American Legion Baseball World Series</b> | Eugene and/or Portland, Ore.                                                                                                     |
| Aug. 27-Sept. 2 | <b>National Convention</b>                   | Nashville, Tenn.                                                                                                                 |
| Sept. 17-19     | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Spokane, Wash.                                                                                                                   |
| Sept. 24-26     | <b>NLIC</b>                                  | Oklahoma City                                                                                                                    |
| Oct. 8-14       | <b>Fall Meetings</b>                         | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |
| Oct. 29-31      | <b>Americanism Conference</b>                | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |
| Nov. 6-12       | <b>Legion College</b>                        | Indianapolis                                                                                                                     |

## Surviving spouse benefit restored

The Veterans Benefits Act of 2003, signed by President Bush in December, restores death-compensation benefits to surviving spouses of veterans who died of service-related causes. The law also offers eligibility for home loans, educational expenses and burial benefits if the survivors remarry on or after age 57. To process claims, individuals must restore Dependency and Indemnity Compensation status by contacting the Department of Veterans Affairs. The law reinstates DIC with no reduction in other benefits.

Affected surviving spouses 57 and older who remarried prior to Jan. 1 must apply prior to Dec. 16, 2004. Those who remarried in 2004 or later should apply for DIC reinstatement immediately.

## For more info

Department of Veterans Affairs

**Call:** (800) 827-1000

**Online:** [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov)

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# How to Reverse Diabetes Symptoms

Here's important news for anyone with diabetes. A remarkable book is now available that reveals medically tested principles that can help normalize blood sugar naturally...and help reverse many symptoms of diabetes. People report **better vision, more energy, faster healing, regained feeling in their feet**, as well as a reduction of various risk factors associated with other diseases.

It's called the *"Diabetes Improvement Program"* and it was researched, developed and written by a leading nutrition specialist. It shows you exactly how nature can activate your body's built-in healers once you start eating the right combination of foods. It can work for both Type I and Type II diabetes and people report it has helped reduce their insulin resistance. It can give diabetics control of their lives and a feeling of satisfaction that comes from having normal blood sugar profiles.

The results speak for themselves. The *"Diabetes Improvement Program"* tells you which delicious foods to eat and which to avoid. It also warns you of the potential danger of certain so-called "diabetes" diets. Diabetics

have written letters to the publisher calling this book "very outstanding"... "a tremendous help"...and saying it made "a difference in my life." The *"Diabetes Improvement Program"* is based on documented scientific principles that can help:

- **Eliminate ketones and give you more abundant energy**
- **Make blood sugar levels go from High Risk to Normal**
- **Stimulate scratches and scrapes to heal faster**
- **Improve eyesight**
- **Improve your balance**
- **Help numb feet regain a level of feeling**
- **Reverse neuropathy and resultant heel ulcers**

Improvement may be seen in other areas as well, such as **lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol and reduced triglyceride levels**. There may also be a reduction of other risk factors associated with: **heart attacks, stroke, retinopathy, kidney damage**.

What's more, it may help improve **short term memory** and make you feel **more**

**alert and no longer chronically tired**. Improvements of **double vision** or *diplopia* may also be experienced.

If you or someone you know have diabetes, this could be the most important book you'll ever read. As part of a special introductory offer, right now you can order a special press run of the *"Diabetes Improvement Program"* for only \$12.95 plus \$2.00 shipping. It comes with a 90 day money back guarantee. If you are not 100% satisfied, simply return it for a full refund...no questions asked.

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### HERE'S HOW TO ORDER:

Simply PRINT your name and address and the words "Diabetes Improvement" on a piece of paper and mail it along with a check or money order to: THE LEADER CO., INC., Publishing Division, Dept. DB817, P.O. Box 8347, Canton, OH 44711. VISA or MasterCard send card number and expiration date. Act now. Orders are fulfilled on a first come, first served basis. ©2004 The Leader Co., Inc.



## How to Submit a Reunion

The American Legion Magazine publishes reunion notices for veterans. Send notices to **The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Reunions, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206**, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org).

Include the branch of service and complete name of the group, no abbreviations, with your request. The listing also should include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name, telephone number and e-mail address. Listings are published free of charge.

Due to the large number of reunions, *The American Legion Magazine* will publish a group's listing only once a year. Notices should be sent at least six months prior to the reunion to ensure timely publication.

## Other Notices

"In Search Of" is a means of getting in touch with people from your unit to plan a reunion. We do not publish listings that seek people for interviews, research purposes, military photos or help in filing a VA claim. Listings must include the name of the unit from which you seek people, the time period and the location, as well as a contact name, tele-

phone number and e-mail address. Send notices to *The American Legion Magazine, Attn: "In Search Of," P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206*, fax (317) 630-1280 or e-mail [reunions@legion.org](mailto:reunions@legion.org).

The magazine will not publish the names of individuals, only the name of the unit from which you seek people. Listings are published free of charge.

Life Membership notices are published for Legionnaires who have been awarded life memberships by their posts. This does not include a member's own Paid-Up-For-Life membership. Notices must be submitted on official forms, which may be obtained by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to *The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Life Memberships, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206*.

"Comrades in Distress" listings must be approved by the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation division. If you are seeking to verify an injury received during service, contact your Legion department service officer for information on how to publish a notice.

To respond to a "Comrades in Distress" listing, send a letter to *The American Legion Magazine, Attn: Comrades in Distress, P.O. Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206*. Include the listing's CID number in your response.

"Taps" notices are published only for Legionnaires who served as department commanders or national officers.

## AIR FORCE

**347th Avionics Maint Sqn**, 5/16-19, Reno, NV, Richard Plechner, (518) 399-5873, [rplechner@comcast.net](mailto:rplechner@comcast.net); **364th Ftr Grp 8th AF & Support Units (WWII)**, Arlington, VA, 9/27-10/4, Dan Leftwich, (937) 890-3641; **394th Bomb Sqn 4th Recon Sqn 5th Bomb Grp 13th AF (Pacific, WWII)**, Arlington, VA, 5/27-31, Dag Larsen, (949) 725-6460, [daglynn@aol.com](mailto:daglynn@aol.com); **394th Bomb Sqn (H) 5th Bomb Grp 13th AF (WWII)**, Washington, 5/27-30, Dag Larsen, (949) 725-6460, [daglynn@aol.com](mailto:daglynn@aol.com); **401st Bomb Grp (H) Assn**, Braintree, MA, 8/18-21, George Menzel, (912) 598-0276; **646th AC&W Sqn (Highlands, AFS)**, Las Vegas, 4/18-22, Henry Oehlsen, (863) 386-9250, [oehlsen@tnni.net](mailto:oehlsen@tnni.net); **1094th USAF Spec Reporting Sqn**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/4-6, Jim Kinard, (843) 650-5176, [jakinard55@aol.com](mailto:jakinard55@aol.com); **1979th AACS Sqn (RAF Brize/Norton/Fairford,**

**England, 1950-1955)**, Niagara Falls, Ontario, 5/17-19, Tom Hill (228) 586-0425, [tomhill@datasync.com](mailto:tomhill@datasync.com); **Institute of Tech Sec Serv**, San Antonio, 3/5-7, Marvin E. Beck, (512) 360-3844, [maryann@academicplanet.com](mailto:maryann@academicplanet.com); **Jolly Green Assn**, Fort Walton Beach, FL, 4/29-5/2, Marty Donohue, (321) 757-0756, [patmarty@aol.com](mailto:patmarty@aol.com); **Niigata/Sado Shima**, Branson, MO, 5/14-16, John Apperson, (205) 823-2930; **Texas Tower 2, 3 & 4, 4604th Support Sqn (Otis AFB, MA) AK-17, USNS New Bedford**, Copley, OH, 4/18-25, Bob Walker, (330) 658-3689; **Veterinary Serv Assn**, San Antonio, 3/7-9, Larry Kerkow, (210) 658-1557, [rxgolfr@aol.com](mailto:rxgolfr@aol.com)

## ARMY

**2nd Inf Div Korean War Vets Alliance**, Las Vegas, 5/17-20, Ralph Hockley, (713) 334-0271, [rmh-2id-kwva@earthlink.net](mailto:rmh-2id-kwva@earthlink.net); **2nd Inf Indian Head Div Assn**, Fort Mitchell, KY, 9/8-11, Ray Pelishek, (608) 783-3501, [onapeg@msn.com](mailto:onapeg@msn.com); **3rd Inf Div Society**, Savannah, GA, 8/27-31, Linda Irvine, (360) 663-2521, [thereunionbrat@tx3.net](mailto:thereunionbrat@tx3.net); **3rd Sqn 4th Cav**, Louisville, KY, 6/24-26, Bob Bingham, (859) 272-5472, [bigbob9976@aol.com](mailto:bigbob9976@aol.com); **4th Armd Div 67th Armor 2nd Med Tank Bn**, Gatlinburg, TN, 8/27-28, Nadene Kyle, (423) 337-6965, [nkylelpn@icx.net](mailto:nkylelpn@icx.net); **6th Bn 80th Arty**, New Orleans, 6/11-13, Arvon Staats, (405) 942-7199, [astaats@ionet.net](mailto:astaats@ionet.net); **9th Ord Tng Bn USA Ord School and Ikego Ammo Depot**, Aberdeen, MD, 6/24-26, Milton W. Leigh, (410) 272-5795; **13th Armd Inf Bn & 2nd Armd Rifle Bn 46th Inf 3rd Armd Div (1955-1960)** "The Cold Warriors," Nashville, 9/30-10/3, Dave Holland, (800) 321-2211, [bayonet96@yahoo.com](mailto:bayonet96@yahoo.com)

**14th Cbt Eng Bn Assn**, Louisville, KY, 9/9-12, Stanley H. Schwartz, (859) 498-4567, [shs313@msn.net](mailto:shs313@msn.net); **16th Armd Div Assn**, Dayton, OH, 9/15-19, Edward Krusheski, [ed16armor@aol.com](mailto:ed16armor@aol.com); **36th Inf Div Assn Midwest Chpt**, Charlotte, NC, 6/11-13, Robert Doby, (740) 825-5038, [rdoby@earthlink.net](mailto:rdoby@earthlink.net); **45th Inf Div Assn "Thunderbirds,"** Oklahoma City, 9/30-10/4, Raul Trevino, (210) 681-9134; **76th Inf Div Assn**, Grand Rapids, MI, 9/16-19, Bob Donahoe, (508) 240-1201, [rdonahoe1@comcast.net](mailto:rdonahoe1@comcast.net); **80th Inf Div Vets Assn**, Coraopolis, PA, Marvin R. Spencer, (409) 948-4276; **147th "Hillclimbers" ASHC**, Hopkinsville, KY, 5/6-10, Don Yaxley, (585) 548-7762, [dwyaxley@cs.com](mailto:dwyaxley@cs.com); **158th Rgt Cbt Team "Bushmasters" (WWII)**, St. Louis, 5/13-15, Jerry Schmidt, (414) 259-9310, [jero15@aol.com](mailto:jero15@aol.com); **222nd Avn Bn H&H Co**, Hopkinsville, KY, 5/6-10, Don Yaxley, (585) 548-7762, [dwyaxley@cs.com](mailto:dwyaxley@cs.com); **299th Eng Bn**, Branson, MO, 6/4-6, James R. Nelson, (616) 527-6288

**439th Eng Const Bn**, West Bend, IA, 8/13-15. Don Bruellman, (515) 887-4953, [prairieo@ncn.net](mailto:prairieo@ncn.net); **753rd AAA Gun Bn (Misawa, Japan, 1953-1955)**, San Antonio, 3/5-7, Robert Inselmann, (972) 231-1665; **773rd Tank Dest Bn Assn**, Milwaukee, 9/7-9, Edward McClelland, (216) 251-0445; **782nd Tank Bn (WWII)**, Oklahoma City, 6/4-6, Lawrence Sanchez, (316) 788-0004; **926th Sig Bn Separate Tact Air Cmd**, Pittsburgh, 8/5-7, Walter S. Rieker, (864) 654-9597, [erieker@earthlink.net](mailto:erieker@earthlink.net); **A Co 1st Bn 31st Inf 7th Div (Camp Casey, Korea)**, Branson, MO, 9/25-26, Raymond Etheredge, (918)

396-3991, [etheredge@gbonline.com](mailto:etheredge@gbonline.com); **Army Trans Assn (Vietnam)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 7/7-11, Bill Wandall, (404) 373-4689; **Delta Co 2nd Bn 8th Cav Abn 1st Cav Div Airmobile (Vietnam)**, San Diego, 5/13-16, Rich O'Brien, (630) 941-8727, [jdjivoll@aol.com](mailto:jdjivoll@aol.com); **K Co Schrieffurt Grp (1956-1957)**, Branson, MO, 9/17-19, Kent C Denton, (405) 681-6762, [kdenton4@cox.net](mailto:kdenton4@cox.net); **QM Corps 252nd Trp A 253rd Trps A, B, C & D**, Fort Reno, OK, 6/5-6, Erma Jean Higgins, (405) 732-1520, [hhiggins@cox.net](mailto:hhiggins@cox.net); **Sig Serv and ASA Okinawa Personnel (1945-1970)**, Colorado Springs, CO, 9/30-10/3, Paul Watson, (978) 465-7473, [w562236@aol.com](mailto:w562236@aol.com); **Steel Tigers 1/77 Armor Bn/Rgt Assn**, Louisville, KY, 7/15-18, Chuck Winslow, (888) 353-5250, [cwin@affirmative.net](mailto:cwin@affirmative.net); **Zittau Survivors (WWII)**, Greenville, TX, 4/29-5/1, Cliff Austin, (802) 877-3451, [yorkbeach1@aol.com](mailto:yorkbeach1@aol.com)

## ARMY AIR FORCE

**475th P-38 Ftr Grp**, Branson, MO, 5/6-9, Norman Weiss, (573) 243-4800, [nweiss@showme.net](mailto:nweiss@showme.net); **Base Depot 2 (Warton, England, WWII)**, Dearborn, MI, 9/30-10/2, Richard McClune, (757) 877-3826, [badtrsr@msn.com](mailto:badtrsr@msn.com)

## COAST GUARD

**USCG 165 Cutters Convoy Grp - Argo WPC 100, Ariadne WPC 101, Atlanta WPC 102, Aurora WPC 103, Calypso WPC 104, Cyane WPC 105, Daphne WPC 106, Dione WPC 107, Galatea WPC 108, Hermes WPC 109, Icarus WPC 110, Nemesis WPC 111, Nike WPC 112, Pandora WPC 113, Perseus WPC 114, Thetis WPC 115, Triton WPC 116, Electra (Potomac) WPC 187, All 125 Cutters Active Class 125-157, Reno, NV, 9/14-16, Harrison Ochs, (314) 822-9931**

## JOINT

**All Vets/All Branches**, Chesterfield, IN, 6/11-13, Bob Thorpe, (317) 510-4382, [bob.thorpe@dfas.mil](mailto:bob.thorpe@dfas.mil); **AOG Reunion Grp - USS Agawam AOG 6, USS Aroostook AOG 14, USS Chestatee AOG 49, USS Chewaucan AOG 50, USS Elkhorn AOG 7, USS Escatawpa AOG 27, USS Genesee AOG 8, USS Kanawha AOG 31, USS Kishwaukee AOG 9, USS Mattabesset AOG 52, USS Namakagon AOG 53, USS Nemasket AOG 10, USS Nuxubee AOG 56, USS Ogechee AOG 35, USS Patapsco AOG 1, USS Ponchatoula AOG 38, USS Rio Grande AOG 3, USS Sequatchee AOG 21, USS Tombigbee AOG 11, San Antonio, 5/13-16, William Waller, (757) 217-2356, [wallerwn@wcbeach.com](mailto:wallerwn@wcbeach.com); **Def Comm Agency (DCA)**, Gettysburg, PA, 4/30-5/2, C.R. Timms, (864) 292-1953, [dcacrtimm@s mindspring.com](mailto:dcacrtimm@s mindspring.com); **Fwd Air Controllers, Fwd Air Navigators, Radio Operators, Maintainers, Intelligence, Mission Support, Crew Chiefs, Cbt Photographers**, San Antonio, 5/5-9, Glenn Bremenkamp, (228) 388-2817, [gsbrem@aol.com](mailto:gsbrem@aol.com)**

**Psych Ops Vets Assn**, Fort Bragg, NC, 7/15-18, Tony Newcomb, (606) 561-0984, [povavso@earthlink.net](mailto:povavso@earthlink.net); **USS Albany CA 123/CG 10/SSN 753**, Branson, MO, 7/20-25, Homer Ray, (518) 864-5731, [albanyreunion@aol.com](mailto:albanyreunion@aol.com); **USS Boston CS 69/CAG 1/SSN 703**, Andover, MA, 7/8-11, Arthur

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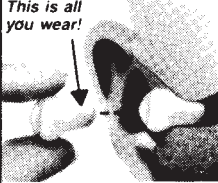
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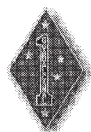
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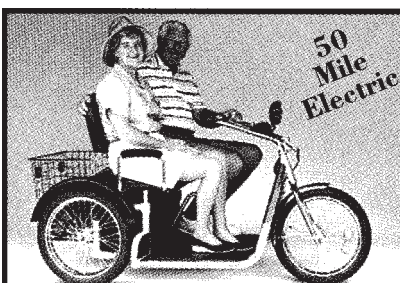
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## parting shots|

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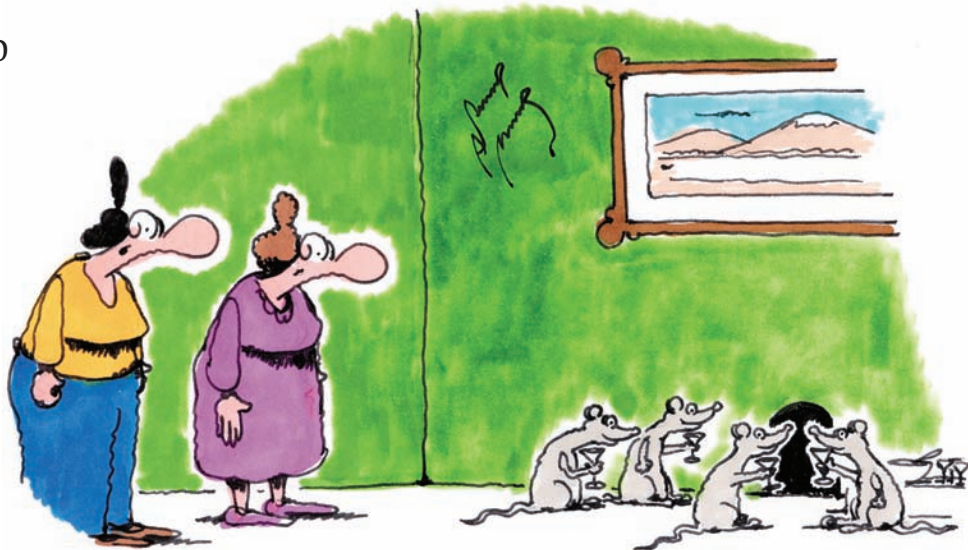
**A MAN WANTED** to learn to skydive. He found an instructor and started lessons. When the time finally came to dive, the instructor told the man to jump out of the plane and pull his rip cord. The instructor then explained that he would jump next and they would go down together. The man understood and jumped from the plane. After being in the air for a few seconds, he pulled the rip cord. The instructor followed. When he pulled the rip cord, however, his parachute didn't open. The instructor, frantically trying to open his parachute, rapidly descended past his student. Seeing this, the man unfastened the straps to his parachute and yelled, "So you want to race, huh?"

**"THERE ARE** certain signs when you're old. I walked past the cemetery the other day, and two guys ran after me with shovels."

—Rodney Dangerfield

**ASK NOT** what your country can do for you, but how much it's going to cost you for them to do it.

**A MAN ATTENDS** a show at an art gallery and is looking at the paintings. One is a huge black canvas with yellow blobs of paint splattered all over it. The next painting is a murky gray color with purple paint streaked across



"We just had the cat declawed."

it. The man walks over to the artist and says, "I don't understand your paintings."

"I paint what I feel inside me," the artist explains.

The man responds, "Have you ever tried Alka-Seltzer?"

**AT A LOCAL BAR**, a young woman told her idea of the perfect mate to some friends. "The man I marry must be a shining light among company. He must be musical, tell jokes, sing and stay home at night." A cynical man overheard and spoke up. "Lady, what you really want is a television set."



"I've been rolling this thing on my abs for a month, and I don't see one bit of difference."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE** is a husband saying, "You want equal rights? You kill the mouse."

**A MAN HATED** his wife's cat and decided to get rid of it by driving the cat 20 blocks from their home and leaving it at the park. When the man arrived home, he saw the cat walking up the driveway. The next day he decided to drive the cat 40 blocks away. He pulled over, put the cat on the ground and headed home. When he arrived home, the cat again was walking up the driveway.

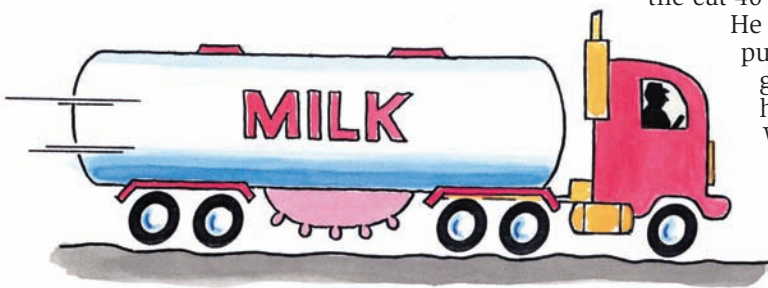
The man continued to take the cat further and further away, and the cat would always beat him home. At last he decided to drive a few miles away, turn right, then left, pass the bridge, then turn right again until he reached what he thought was a safe distance from his home, where he left the cat.

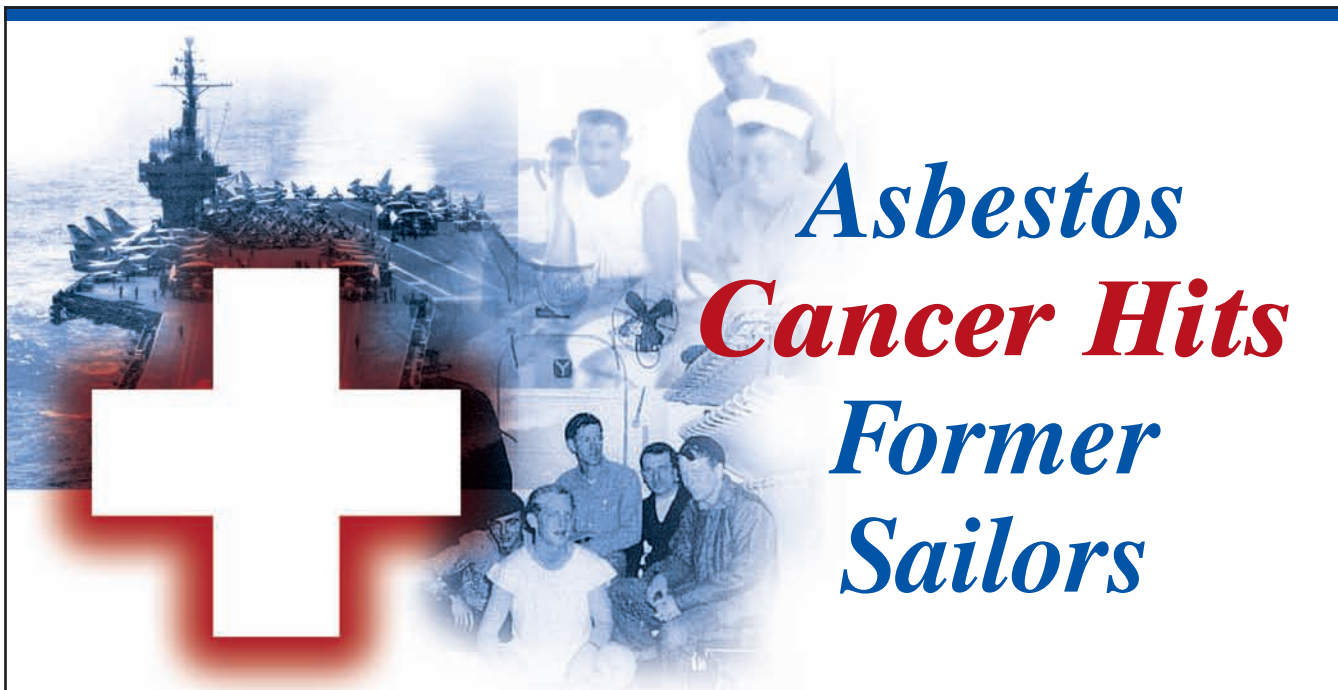
Hours later the man called his wife. "Jane, is the cat there?"

"Yes," she answered. "Why do you ask?"

Frustrated, the man said, "Put the thing on the phone. I'm lost and need directions."

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